

# Missionaries to Muslims League

News and Notes.

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## THE FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE LEAGUE

We present to members and friends our fifth annual report, with a note of praise to our Heavenly Father whose guidance and help have ever been with us. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory!" There were times when the light was not clear. But it was ever thus. We have all known duties and difficulties in days past which were perplexing, but in review with a right perspective how often they revealed the brightness of the Father's glory.

"The toppling crags of duty scaled  
Are close upon the shining table-lands,  
To which our God Himself is moon and sun."

The origin of the League is known to most of our members. It was urged at the Lucknow Conference in the following words: "A Missionaries to Muslims League might be established. We need some bond of unity in this great work; something that will keep the Muhammadan problem constantly before us. I have referred to Muslim unity: Why should we not show a more united front? Can we accomplish the task if we are not united? We should aim at an ordered advance." The League was the result of the Lucknow meeting, and in May, 1912, the first number of *News and Notes* appeared.

To very many the League has been a source of strength. The bond of union is based on the desire to "*pray more and work more for the evangelization of the Muslim world,*" and "to help—by prayer and mutual sympathy, by stimulating each other through news of encouraging work, by passing on particulars of useful books and tracts for ourselves and for the Muslims among whom we labour, by comparing notes on methods of work, and by encouraging others to take an interest in this important work." We feel that during the five years of its existence the League has not failed in its aim, although it must be confessed that there is not so much news reported now as formerly, nor so many requests for prayer sent in.

The membership of the League has not been so largely increased this year as previously. Shall we put it down to the circumstances of war? Sixteen new members have been enrolled and four have resigned, making a net increase for the year of 12. The total number of members is now 218. The membership consists for the most part of active missionaries doing service in such Muslim lands as India, Egypt, Arabia, Persia and

China, men and women who feel that it is important to know what Muslims are thinking and saying and doing, if they would make their mission effective.

With the present war crisis so absorbing, it is impossible to do little more than hold on, but we look forward to the time when the League will become a stronger bond of unity and a more aggressive means of missionary service for winning the Muslim world to Christ.

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The members have a grateful memory of the invaluable service to the League of the Rev. W. Goldsack as acting secretary. His accurate knowledge of Islám, his literary gifts, his zeal to help every worker to become thoroughly equipped for a virile evangelism among Muslims, made him eminently fitted to lead us on in this loving Crusade of the Cross. During the year he completed his Bengali translation of the Qu'ran. We rejoice to think that his absence, and also that of the Revs. H. Walter and J. Bevan Jones, is only for a time. They have dropped behind the firing line that they may the better fit themselves in Arabic and Islámic subjects for a still more strenuous struggle at the front in the days to come.

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The subjects dealt with in *News and Notes* during the year were all along the line of effectiveness in service. Two able articles summed up the lessons to be learnt from the seven sketches of Muslim converts which had been published in the paper. They were suggestive as to how best to deal with those we would win. There were articles, too, on how best to conduct Bible classes, what to give Muslims to read, and how to present the difficult subject of the Divine Trinity. Then Mr. Goldsack wrote most illuminative papers on the Khalifate and Intercession in the Qu'ran and the Traditions.

One feature of the year was the success that the late secretary had in securing such able experts as Drs. Hooper, Wherry, Weitbrecht and the Revs. Gairdner, Rice and Goldsmith to write for our paper.

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We review the past, we buy up the opportunities in the present, we look forward to the future in a spirit of unusual expectancy. Signs are not wanting that there will be unprecedented openings for extensive work among Muhammadans in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Arabia at the close of the war. Is the Church ready for the great adventure? As we go forth again we would take upon our lips the ever timely prayer—

“O Lord, revive Thy work in the midst of the years,  
 In the midst of the years make it known;  
 In wrath remember mercy.”

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[Owing to considerable delay in receiving the last printing bill, we must hold over the publishing of the financial statement until next month.]

## ISLAM'S BLIGHT ON HOME LIFE

In one of Marion Crawford's novels the heroine is made to say, concerning Islám, "It is a man's religion!" And this is the view of every Christian authority of note. Most Muhammadan apologists, too, when dealing with polygamy, divorce, concubinage and slavery in Islám, have unwittingly convinced us of the same thing. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan gave them the lead long ago. His arguments for the Muslim attitude towards women are always based upon considerations for the man.

In an article on "Woman under Islám," appearing in the *Islámíic Review* for readers in England, we are treated to a very rosy picture. The writer is absolutely ignorant of the real conditions, or is hiding the truth. It is not difficult to pick out a few isolated texts from the Qu'ran, build up a theory and interlard the production with posies of Oriental poetry—but what of the facts? Among other proofs of the benefit Islám bestows upon women he quotes lines from Sadi's *Boston*—

"Devout women, the Lord God who've faithfully serv'd,  
Shall high precedence hold over men that have swerv'd.  
Hast no shame, thou, a man, as thou call'st thyself now,  
That then women shall o'er thee a precedence know?  
Spite their physical hindrances, women shall then,  
Here and there, through devotion, take rank before men.  
Thou, excuseless, shalt there, woman-like, stand apart.  
Plume thee not as a man! Less than woman, depart!"

We should like to tell the writer that all this will be in spite of Islám, not because of it. Further, is there not at the back of Sadi's thought the conclusion that to be "woman-like" is to be an inferior creature in God's universe!

It is now admitted by many modern Muslims that the condition of their women is appalling. An Indian Muhammadan, Mr. Khuda Bukhsh, of Calcutta, has given a very real picture of their state. He says,—“We cannot have a very high regard for womankind with a system which sanctions four wives. Polygamy is destructive alike of domestic peace and social purity. Nor can we have a sound basis for family life with women sunk in the deepest ignorance and the wildest superstitions. Without physical exercise, without the benefit of fresh air, without a ray of intellectual sunlight, can women be mothers of a race of stalwart warriors, intellectual giants and far-sighted statesmen?”

To better understand the condition of Muslim women in East Bengal and Assam we have asked some of our lady members to write articles, which we give below.

## THE WOMEN'S GREAT MORAL LACK

BY A MEDICAL MISSIONARY LADY

In visiting Muhammadan village homes, especially in the medical capacity, we note the hopeless lack of regard for the laws of purdah in

the home life. I have been often made to exclaim that they only observe purdah in outward name. Real sacred regard for the purdah privacy is in 999 cases out of a 1,000 a foreign element to the women as well as to the men of the household. Even in cases of illness of some of the female members of the family, while the younger and more bashful ladies will not speak of their illness in the hearing of the boys and men of the family, some older woman will shout it forth to all, or the men are known to be listening outside the purdah while the consultation is going on within.

The first task of the lady doctor in the village homes is to insist on the removal of all children and men from the room and near vicinity of the house, and to keep on insisting is generally necessary till the consultation is finished.

The general first impressions of ordinary village Muhammadan homes are lack of discipline, uncleanness, disorder and disobedience. In this respect the better and wealthier classes are frequently far worse than the poorer people. On further acquaintance we feel the sore is deeper seated in impure ideas and light regard of sin, resulting in careless moral ideals and apparently satisfied endurance of many flagrant sins. We cannot say that the public opinion is strong against dishonesty, untruth and adultery in most of the Muhammadan village circles.

Without reforming Islám these cannot be changed. So hopeless a task is this that we are often puzzled as to the best way to proceed.

In our work among the women how far is it wise to expose the weakness of their system of religion to their simple uneducated women? I should be very glad of the experience of others in this respect. The plan I have followed has been to preach Christ crucified, the need of atonement, and the terribleness of sin. I do not make a practice of pointing out their Prophet's sins and faults, but if they defend him as sinless, or say that they depend on him for salvation, I then tell them some of the life history of Muhammad, which is sufficient to show them that he was only an ordinary man and sinful like other men. This is generally an eye-opener to most of them. Some will scarcely believe this, others will say, as the men do, that sin was not imputed unto him as he was a prophet of God, but the latter is rarely said by the women. The majority will say with a sigh that "we have no way of salvation, we are all sinners; only the mercy of God can save us, and only God knows whether we shall be saved or not."

I am convinced that one of the best ways to attack the forces of Islám is to enlighten the women, and to so create in them a desire for something better that in time will dispel the darkness of Islám and open a way for the Truth, the Way and the Life.

## THE WOMEN'S APPALLING IGNORANCE AND SUPERSTITION

BY ANOTHER LADY MEDICAL MISSIONARY

Though the ignorance and degradation of the women is a byword in every Muhammadan country, one sometimes is tempted to wonder if there is any district in which they are as ignorant and prejudiced as they are here. As a whole they belong to a low class, and one rarely meets one who can even read.

Their ideas of God are very materialistic. In one village a feast was being observed in honour of Fatima. I asked why, and was told that Fatima was Allah. When I exclaimed at this, one woman said, "Well, she is equal to Allah." In another village the women had evidently never heard of Jesus Christ, for when the Bible-woman was speaking of Him, I overheard them ask one another, "What is she talking about? Is it of some kind of fish?" Evidently they were confusing "Isa" with "Hilsa," a kind of fish common in this district. Yet the Bible-woman had a good knowledge of the Mussulmani Bengali dialect spoken here. A few days ago a woman explained to me how Christ was conceived. Adam sneezed and his sneeze was caught and put in a box. Then Gabriel took the box to Mary and told her to open it and she would have a son. Mary at first objected, but was at last persuaded to let the sneeze out, and so in due time Christ was born.

Many have been influenced by Hinduism, and if in trouble call on certain of the Hindu gods. When at maternity cases I have frequently heard them call on, and make promises of offerings to, Basudeb, as the Hindus do. They have a terrible fear of evil spirits, which keeps them in a state of constant terror and apprehension. Some dare not open a door after dark. Widows living alone with little children have told me how they have spent the night trembling, perhaps with a sick child for whom they wanted help, but were afraid to risk opening the door lest the evil spirits should injure herself or the child, or of having gone out in desperation, only to be nearly caught by the bhut, or hit on the head or otherwise injured. I have been shown girls whose bangles and other jewellery had been taken mysteriously, or on whose body a strange mark had suddenly appeared—"the work of a bhut," of that the neighbours had no doubt. Many illnesses are caused by these evil spirits and by the evil eye. To guard against the latter they wear charms--garlic tied to a strand of hair. When they expose a wound or sore they spit on it to counteract the effect of a possible evil eye among the onlookers. When one enters a courtyard one often sees a mother hastily throw her sari over her baby's head, particularly if the little one is suffering from any skin disease. A Muhammadan woman is indeed in bondage--to custom, to her husband who can so easily divorce her or bring another wife to vex her, to ignorance and fear and superstition, to sin and Satan and the powers of the air and of darkness. Only Christ can set her free, but against Him she is strongly prejudiced--a dark picture, a hopeless task; with man impossible, with God all things are possible.

## A MUSLIM WOMAN'S MIND

BY A ZENANA MISSIONARY

I am a Muhammadan woman, and I've lived in Bhadaghar all my life. The other day, when I was husking the rice, I heard my little brother call, "Mem, mem, the mem-sahib is coming." I had never seen a mem-sahib before, but had heard they were quite different from us, and now's my opportunity. How queer one looks. She's got a topee on her head, but it is quite different from the kind our men wear. My mother thought she was a man. I thought she might be one, too, but when mother said that, my brother said, "Get out of it, it is a woman." We called all the women from the houses near by, and we all sat in a semi-circle around her.

She had a box in her hand, and we all wondered what was inside. I asked, and found out there were books. So we asked her to read one. She read a bit, and then began to talk to us about Allah. However, we were more interested in her and her hair and clothes. She does not put oil on her hair because it spoils her topee, but I don't like the look of it. It is tied up into a bob, and when we wanted to take it down she objected, and said it was not their rule to take down their hair before people. She then said something about sin, and that to tell lies was sin; but how in the world are we going to get on if we don't tell lies? However, that's not sin to us. If we don't fast or say prayers, that's sin to us, and the other doesn't matter much.

Then my aunt asked her if she was married. "No," she said. How astonishing! I wonder why. Why, that's sin, I am sure. She says it is not sin not to be married. Fancy not being married!

Then she said something about offering sacrifices for sin, and that as we sin so we must be punished. I asked if she had got a father and mother, and brothers and sisters, and if they were married, and she said she had. She can't be very fond of them to leave them.

Then we all had an argument about different things we had heard about the mem-sahibs.

After awhile she said something about Isa Nabi (Jesus), and that He sacrificed His life for everybody; but that can't be true, because He never died. He went straight to heaven. A woman from another house said, however, that some Muhammadans of the Qadiani sect know that He died. The mem-sahib said that He died, and rose again the third day. It's wonderful, but anyhow we don't want to have anything to do with their religion. Why, they eat pork!

The maulvies tell us not to believe what they say. Anyway, she's a woman, so what does she know? After a bit she sang a hymn, and then got up and went away. I hope she will come again. It's very interesting to see what she's got on. It's very queer, and we don't see very much, and I've got lots more questions to ask her.

## NOTES

“What would'st thou have? ’ Hands hard as Thine in toiling;  
As Thine in prayer uplifted, strong, refined;  
Fearless as Thine, midst soul's defiled, of soiling;  
And swift as Thine, round sinking souls entwined.”

**Congratulation.**—Last month the Rev. Dr. Wherry completed 49 years' service in India, and at the same time celebrated the 74th anniversary of his birthday. There is no name better known in connection with missions to Muslims in India than that of Dr. Wherry, and his books are on the shelves of every worker who specialises in the same cause. We voice the feeling of the brotherhood when we express the hope that Dr. and Mrs. Wherry may see many more years of fruitful service, with an ever-increasing experience of joy and trust in the victorious Christ.

**In Which We Rejoice.**—One of our members in Bengal writes—“I have a very interesting Muhammadan gentleman preparing for baptism. He was a Maulana and has come into the light simply through studying his Qu'ran. He is a very able man and should be a great addition to our staff of workers. As a Maulana he has covered many districts. He used to travel about in a *budgerow* (house-boat) with his Maulvies.”

**Baptisms.**—We rejoice to hear of the baptism of a famous Pir and his family in the Kanaghat District, Bengal.

**The Revolution in Russia** will have far-reaching effects in setting free the forces of evangelism. It will certainly mean a more aggressive missionary propaganda among the 20 millions of Muslims who are subjects of the Russian Government. On the other hand, greater liberty might give life to the Muhammadan movement. The Tartars, who number about 15 millions in Russia, are said to be a higher type than the Turks. They plume themselves on their intelligence and power. They have just built a beautiful mosque in Petrograd with the aid of the Amir of Bokhara. The building is situated in a central position. “It is a massive granite building, the sombreness of which is relieved by a dome of cerulean tiles and a blue tiled entrance porch. The latter is wrought with decorations in arabesque patterns, and with inscriptions from the Qu'ran. There are three minarets, from whence the ears of the ‘Orthodox’ will in days to come be jarred by the call to Muslim prayer. The whole building recalls Samarcand save in its freshness.”

**Wine Wins Against Islam.**—It is well to recall at this time the story of why Russia is not wholly a Muhammadan country. The story is all the more interesting since the absolute prohibition of the sale and use of intoxicating liquors has been proclaimed by royal command. Russian history relates how, in the year 986, the barbarous Vladimir received envoys from the different religions of the world. First came the Bulgarian Muhammadans. They said, “Wise and prudent prince as thou art, thou knowest neither law nor religion. Believe in ours, and honour Muhammad.”

"In what does your religion consist?" asked Vladimir. "We believe in God," they replied, "but we believe also in what the Prophet teaches. Be circumcised, abstain from pork, drink no wine; and after death choose out of seventy beautiful wives the most beautiful." Vladimir listened to them for the last reason, but he objected to the abstinence from pork, and above all the prohibition of drinking. "Drinking is the great delight of Russians," he said, "we cannot live without it."

**"The Moslem World."**—This quarterly, edited so ably by Dr. S. M. Zwemer, is invaluable to all Christian workers among Muslims. Every issue has articles dealing with timely topics which we all need to know and understand, if we would be thoroughly equipped for contact with those we would win to Christ. The articles in the January issue dealing with Muslim Mysticism and Turkish Diplomacy are exceedingly fine. They alone are worth the price of the magazine. It is now printed in America, and published from the editorial office, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York.

A Muslim student in Edwardes College, Panjab, at a farewell tea asked permission to address his fellow students. He said, "I want to tell you what I have learned in this college. It is this, that I cannot be a Muslim (*i.e.*, a man at peace with God) unless I am first a Christian, and that I must believe in the perfect purity of Christ."

## PRAISE AND PRAYER

*"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,  
And spirit with spirit may meet;  
Closer is He than breathing,  
And nearer than hands or feet."*

**Praise** for the good news in this issue concerning certain Muslim leaders who are accepting Christ as their Divine Lord and Saviour.

**Prayer:** (1) For all Foreign and Indian women workers who have to daily face the dense ignorance and sin of Muhammadan homes.

(2) For the veterans who have borne the burden and heat of the day, but who still look and pray for a glorious ingathering.

(3) For the proposed new Home for Muslim Converts (young men) to be opened in the Panjab. (*Vide March News and Notes*).

(4) For all Muhammadan students who are under the influence of the Gospel in the different missionary schools and colleges.

*The Annual Subscription to the League is Rs. 2-8-0 (3s. 4d.).  
Members are requested to send news and requests for prayer to*

JOHN TAKLE,  
*Brahmanbaria, Bengal.*

Hon. Sec., M. M. League.