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*Challenge*  
*and*  
*Counter*  
*Challenge*



## CHALLENGE AND COUNTER-CHALLENGE

A Missionary Magazine for Young People desirous of learning more about the challenge of Islam, and of helping to counter it by the proclamation of the Gospel.

Issued by the

FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH FOR THE MOSLEMS

The following Societies co-operating:—

ALGIERS MISSION BAND

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EGYPT GENERAL MISSION

106, Highbury New Park, London, N.5.

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# A Letter for You!

CHALLENGE AND COUNTER-CHALLENGE,  
c/o 106, Highbury New Park,  
LONDON, N. 5.

*March 1st, 1952.*

My dear Reader,

A very happy New Year to you! Does it seem a bit late for such a greeting? I don't think so. After all, you still have ten months before you, which I am sure will be filled with delightful experiences. In all of them, I wish you the maximum of happiness as you come through them "more than conqueror through Him that loved you."

Do you reciprocate that greeting, and wish the same to "Challenge and Counter Challenge"? For the magazine stands in great need of such. It is not feeling at all happy just now, for it is suffering from poor circulation. No, that is not the medical term, but a literary one, which means that it has not got enough subscribers. This issue begins Volume 3. A three-year-old ought to be a sturdy toddler, standing on its own feet, but we find the magazine financially still an infant 'in arms,' far too dependent on the missionary societies, instead of being self-supporting. Can you not do anything to help?

Here is a suggestion. For each quarter's issue, try to get one new subscriber, that would mean a total of four for the year. Will you do it? Don't just read this and pass quickly on to the next page. Take it up as a challenge to yourself. "Challenge" has just that personal meaning; one explanation of the word is 'a summons to fight a duel,' which, as you know, is a battle between two people. Why not make a game of it, and have as it were a series of secret duels between yourself and other people, who, when you first present them with the 'Challenge,' have no idea of subscribing? See if you can win the victory. I am sure

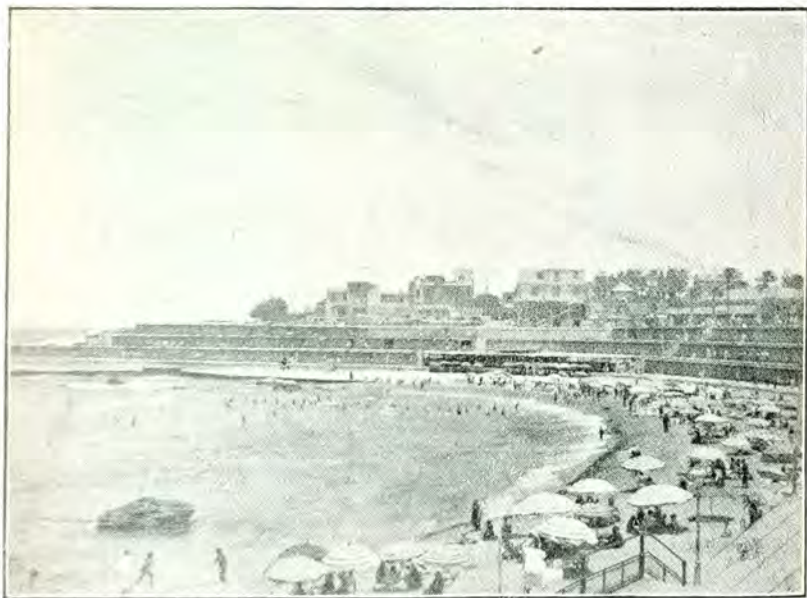
your vanquished opponents will be very grateful to you in the end when they realise what a splendid magazine you have introduced them to.

I wish this was a telephonic communication, and not a letter. I would like to hear your cheery answer, "All right, count on me. A happy New Year to 'Challenge' and lots of new subscribers." Of course, there is such a thing as a postal reply. . . . I wonder??

With renewed best wishes for 1952,

Yours in the Master's Service,

THE EDITOR.



*Stanley Bay, Alexandria*

## A Girls' Club in Egypt.

Everywhere in England these days one hears of Clubs, Youth Fellowships and "Squashes," for young people. Perhaps you would be interested to hear about a Christian Girls' Club in Alexandria, one of Egypt's sea-ports? It is not exactly as you would picture a Club, possibly just the very opposite, but then most of the things in the Middle East seem upside down! To begin with, the Club meetings are held in the mornings. This is because it is for girls who have left school, and are old enough to be useful at home. Their mothers either go out visiting themselves in the afternoons and need the girls to look after the house, or they receive visitors and the girls must be there to wait upon them.

Let us go along to the Club. As it caters for the better-class girls, we must make our way to the residential part of the city. We come to a very fine looking house, surrounded by a beautiful garden, and we climb to the top flat where the girls meet. As we said before it opens early, at 9 a.m. We begin the day by singing hymns and choruses, a habit which we hope and trust the girls will continue to practice even when they have left us, and gone to homes of their own. Then we have prayer together; and this is followed by lovely Bible Study Classes.

After this, the scene changes—on with our aprons and to work! There are cooking classes, dressmaking, painting, and all kinds of needlework. Presently there come a break, when there is just time for a game of ping-pong, then all get quickly to work again until 1 p.m.

But I am sure, most of all, you would like to take a look at the girls themselves. Over there is a fine looking girl of about eighteen. She looks so sad and tired; she even seems to be crying. But they are tears of joy, she tells us, because she is so happy here. At home, there is never any peace; although she does her best, she is just beaten in order to make her do more and more. "This is the only place of happiness I have," she says. Each girl has some story of difficulty, and how glad we are to be able to help them.

Now here is S—— coming running into the room with an armful of models of dresses to show us. She is one of the dressmaking teachers, and such a lovely Christian. You would not recognise her as the girl who joined us some years ago. Then she looked the picture of misery. She was stunted in growth because of the cruel treatment of her step-mother, and her face seemed really distorted. She could hardly hold a needle, because of the terribly hard work she had had to do at home ; she could not even smile. She found it almost impossible to learn at first, but very gradually she made progress. One day, as some of us were working together, we suddenly heard laughing in the next room. We all stopped with surprise. It was S—— laughing! we had to go and see her. In the end she became one of our very brightest girls, took her diploma, and is now a most successful teacher.

Shall we stay just a few minutes longer to get to know H——We had prayed and prayed so much that she might be allowed to join the Club. Oh, what a joy it was when God graciously answered our prayers, and one morning in walked H—— Her father is a Moslim, but her mother was English, and she died when H——was seventeen. Almost at once her father began arranging to marry again. When H——knew she just said “ Oh, father ! ” He asked her how she dared say anything. She answered that she had two fires in her heart, one because she missed her mother and the other because he was going so soon to fill her place. That night the father beat H—— so unmercifully that he thought he had killed her. After three days she regained consciousness, but was terribly disfigured. How these girls suffer ! You can imagine how they love the happy hours spent at the Club.

Will you pray for these our Moslim sisters ? It is not easy for them to follow the Lord. Some have not yet even come to Him, but if “ we ask ” He will do, for “ Whatsoever ye ask the Father in My Name, *that* will I do.”

“ Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. Them also I must bring, and they shall hear My Voice, and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd ” John 10, 16.

*Miss F. Webb*  
(*Alexandria, Egypt.*)



## “Reading the Way to Discipleship of Christ.”

“I want you to give up Friday afternoon to the young Muslim pharmacist in the hospital. Ask him to take you for a walk, and listen to his story.” So spoke Mr. Macintyre to me, and thus my friendship with Simaan commenced.

The hospital spoken of was in Amman, the capital of the country which was then called Transjordan. For this all happened in the year 1925. I was staying in Es Salt with Mr. Macintyre who was the missionary in charge there, and I was helping him with the services in Holy Week. I had never been to Amman itself, which was 18 miles away, so I was very pleased when Mr. Macintyre told me he wanted me to go to that city and take the Arabic services on Good Friday. Then he added his request that I should make time in the afternoon to get to know the pharmacist there who



was a young Muslim. I gladly complied, for what could be more fitting than to spend Good Friday making friends with one who was enquiring into the meaning of the Christian



Faith—one who for some twenty years had believed the Muslim challenge, so unsuccessfully countered down the centuries, that Jesus Christ had never really been crucified?

So Simaan and I met that Good Friday afternoon. Later he told me why he wanted to be called by that particular name, which is the Arabic form of Simon. It was not Simon Peter whom he had in mind to choose as his 'patron saint,' but Simon the Cyrenian, who had carried the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ to Calvary. We sat for some time in the ruins of the great amphitheatre of the period when Amman was called Philadelphia, one of the cities of the Decapolis, mentioned in the New Testament. (In Old Testament days the city was called Rabbath Ammon). Afterwards we went to Simaan's room, and there he told me something of his story.

He came from a leading family in Iraq, his father having been an officer in the Turkish Army. The lad in his teens had been a voracious reader, but it was not until he had completed a somewhat unsatisfactory year in Beirut that he came across Christian literature. Thereafter he bought and read all he could find and that was available, including the New Testament. (I could see the shelf of the room we were in was well stocked with Arabic books and pamphlets). But he had met very few Christians, either indigenous (that is belonging to the lands where he lived) or foreign, that is from Europe or America. On leaving Beirut, he found his way to Transjordan and there obtained employment in the pharmacy of the small mission hospital. Here, at the time that I met him, he was working, but spending his spare time reading himself into the discipleship of Jesus Christ.

It was all to good effect, for the next year he was ready to take his stand and was baptized in Jerusalem. The service centred round the Cross of Calvary, the cardinal factor of the Christian Faith, which Islam yet needs to appreciate. As so often happens with converts from Islam, there was a break with the family in Iraq. None the less there was an occasional exchange of letters until Simaan's father passed away. It will be a long time yet before Islam will realise all that is meant in the term "Freedom of religion"—but patience will one day meet its reward. After his baptism he went to work

for a spell in the larger hospital in Old Cairo, where he came into touch with Temple Gairdner, an outstanding missionary of that time, who was working amongst the Muslims of Egypt.

In due course Simaan married. His bride was a Jewess, but she had been baptized into the Christian Faith in Cairo sometime before Simaan was. She was trained to be a nurse in the English Mission Hospital in Jerusalem. Then she went to Amman hospital where she met her husband—he from Iraq, she from Greece, but in finding Christ, they found each other. The newly-married couple went to live in Gaza, and from now on Simaan entered into a period of increasingly useful and fruitful service. He was no longer employed on the medical side, but became a catechist. After a while he went to Jerusalem where he taught Arabic to missionaries in the Newman School of Missions. While here the Palestine Church Council asked that he should be released to care for the (then) important, if small, congregation in Akka (Acre). Then in 1938 he was chosen by the Council as a candidate



*Galilee*

for ordination. This entailed a year's study at Wycliffe Hall, Oxford, where he was accompanied by another Arab clergyman, who to-day is in charge of Christ Church, Nazareth.

Simaan returned from England, and was the first convert from Islam to be ordained in our church in Palestine. After ordination he was sent to the first church to be built by the C.M.S. in Galilee, namely the Church of St. Paul in Shef Amru. Some years later he was transferred to Ram Allah, ten miles north of Jerusalem. This is close to the village from which, tradition says, Mary and Joseph returned to the city in their quest for discovering the whereabouts of the Boy Jesus. Here he lived with his wife, and four children, and made himself increasingly indispensable as a Christian minister. People would listen to what he had to say, because he preached and taught from an experience that he had made his own. His influence extended beyond his own parish, too, for he was made Editor of the Church magazine published by the Arab Anglican Church. Then, at a moment when from the human side he seemed most needed, God saw fit to take him. He was fatally injured on the road between Jerusalem and Nablus, while he was on his way to arrange with the Bishop about a confirmation service in his church. Just about half his life he had been a Muslim, the other half he spent as a Christian. An important point to remember is that because in part he had been a good Muslim, so he developed into a better Christian with growing influence and respect.

The four children with their mother continued to stay in Ram Allah after their father's death. It was in the early days of the Palestine war, and the Iraqi army came to encamp not far from the town. Amongst the officers was a friend of the family who knew their history, and soon heard of the tragedy of Simaan's death. He found out how the family was situated, and on returning to Iraq he told the relatives what he had discovered. Simaan's older brother came at once across the desert to visit his nieces and nephew and their mother. He made them a very generous proposition that he should share with them the ancestral property, thus giving his brother's children the same rights as his own. The only request the uncle made was that they should all leave war-stricken Palestine, and go off with him to the safety and plenty of Iraq. This was enticing and generous to a degree; there were no other conditions. The bonds of relationship were

strong, and the real kindness appreciated. But after thought and prayer and advice from friends, their answer was that they could not go with him, grateful though they were. Their father has chosen to go forward along the "Via Crucis" (The Way of the Cross) and as one of them expressed it, if their father had thought it worth it, they would follow him.

"If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me."

*Rev. Eric F. F. Bishop*

*(formerly Newman School of Missions, Jerusalem).*



*A Group of Muslim Converts from  
Egypt, Nubia, Palestine, Persia, Sudan*

## The Cicada

In the Lebanon mountains, and other places near the shores of the Mediterranean Sea where pine trees grow, there exists an insect with a very interesting life-story. It is called the Cicada (pronounced *Si-kay-da*) and sometimes it is mistaken for a cricket.

It begins life as a little wormlike creature, living down in the dark earth at the foot of a pine tree. When it is hungry and thirsty it sucks the juice from one of the roots of the tree until it is satisfied. Thus its life goes on for years, until one day its tiny body begins to change. It has grown bigger and now has two pairs of legs and two arms with hands like small shovels. How wonderful this is! Now it need not crawl any longer: it has become rather like a beetle with legs for walking, and with its 'hands' it can dig out passages in the earth.

Then one day as it works hard digging a passage, the soil seems very loose, and soon there is nothing left but a great space, and instead of darkness to which it has been accustomed there is a bright light which hurts its eyes. Yes, it has come to the surface of the earth, into the sunshine.

"I cannot live here" he thinks to himself, "I prefer to go back to the darkness from which I came," and back he goes. Yet in the darkness he cannot forget the strange light he has seen, and a deep longing takes possession of him until finally it becomes unbearable and he feels he *must* get out of the dark earth. But this time, as he appears above the ground it is still dark, for he has reached the surface by night. Still not satisfied he feels a craving to go higher. There is a small bush nearby which he finds easy to climb. Reaching the highest twig he grips it and rests. He would like to go higher still . . . but he has no wings like a real beetle.

After a time the sun rises and the warm sunshine envelops him, and now he finds he welcomes it: in fact he has no desire to return to his former life.

Suddenly he realises that the skin on his back has rent and left a large hole, and instinctively he knows that he has to crawl out of it: first his head, then his legs and arms, and lastly his body. It is not easy and takes two full hours of strenuous effort. Then he rests awhile, sitting near the old

skin which stands on the twig as if he were still inside.

Then gradually he notices that he has become an entirely new creature. He has two pairs of lovely wings, and spreading them out finds he can fly! Up he goes, higher and higher! Now he has reached the uppermost branches of the pine tree. A wonderful world opens out before him. However did he endure living in the darkness of the earth? Now the Cicada enjoys light, fresh air and a gentle breeze blowing through the branches of the tree.

How he would love to praise and thank his Creator for such a wonderful new life. Then to his surprise he finds that he has received in his new body a musical organ with which he can praise his Creator all day long. By the movement of membranes and fibres placed where his wings join his body, he can emit loud sounds. And up there in the pine trees he finds many others like him, so all together they sing and praise their Maker in a mighty choir that the whole wood in their vicinity resounds with the noise.

The female Cicada lays her eggs on the pine branch, and later these turn to tiny grubs. They fall down to the ground and crawl into the earth, beginning the same life-cycle as their mother lived.

There is a parable for us in this, for it resembles so nearly our experiences of life. God says, "The heart of man is evil from his youth," but He graciously puts into our hearts a longing for something better, till like the Cicada we begin to crave for light.

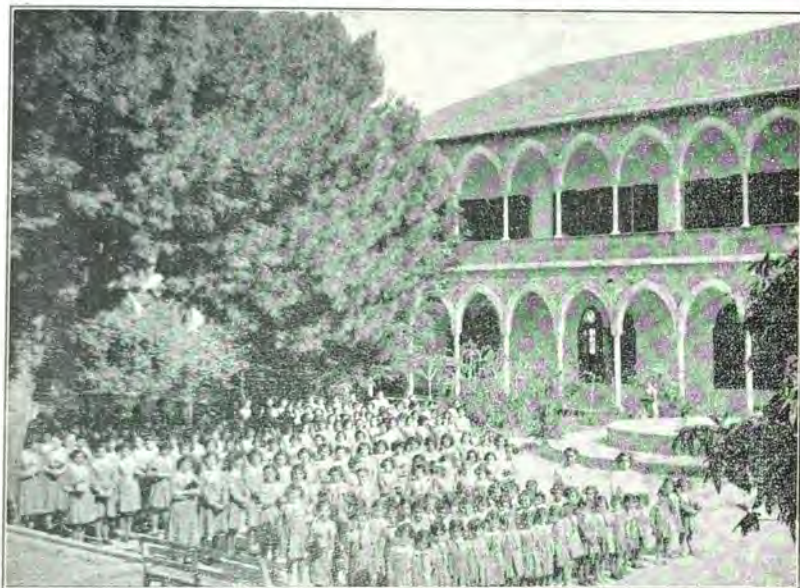
Then we long to climb higher as the beetle did, trying to overcome evil in our own strength. But, just as it got to the highest twig and could go no farther, so we too come to an end of our power, and not until our lives are completely changed by Christ Jesus can we live the new life God wants us to live.

But this miracle can take place in our lives if we come to Him for cleansing in His precious blood, and His joy may so fill our hearts that we shall love to praise Him too.

*Clara E. Peter*  
(*Swiss Evangelical Mission*).

## Lebanese School Girls.

It was about four o'clock so school was over for the day and the girls were streaming out under the great archway of the main gate. As they got to the gate two girls paused



*Training College Beirut*

before getting off for home in opposite directions. One of these, a Muslim, was just turning away when her companion asked her to go a little way with her. She refused, she wanted to go straight home that day.

“Just come a little way with me,” said her friend, “then you can hurry back in plenty of time.”

“No, I can’t, not to-day.”

“Oh, come on. Come with me as far as the corner.”



“No,” replied the other firmly. “I must go this way. There is no other way,” and turning in the direction of home she set off up the road. As she went she thought of what they had been saying and of her last remark. “There is no other way. What made me say that? Where did I hear that expression before?” For a long time she could not remember, and then suddenly it flashed into her mind: “No other way but Jesus.”

Then she could not forget, and she wanted to forget. She was a Muslim and Muslims did not believe that there was no other way but Jesus. In fact they did not believe that Jesus was the Way at all. They must not! Mohammed was their Prophet. But there it was ringing in her ears, slipping into her thoughts when she least expected it, disturbing her work and her play. She told herself that it was just a saying of the Christians. It was all right for them to believe it, but for a Muslim—impossible.

The weeks went by but, try as she would, she could not forget. At last in desperation she thought she must talk to somebody, and when the opportunity came she consulted one of the staff. As they talked together she came to realize that the Lord Jesus was indeed the Way and the only Way, and there and then she asked Him to be her Saviour.

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Easter time had brought round the usual holidays. The girls had gone home rejoicing, and the school seemed very quiet. So it was a surprise when one afternoon a Muslim girl came in. She had learned to love the Lord Jesus in another school but she knew she would get a welcome. She looked as if she had been weeping, and when asked she said: “It is awful with my relations. Just because they know I love the Lord Jesus they mock and laugh all the time. They say terrible things about Him. I don’t mind what they say about me, but when they go on saying things about Him I can’t bear it.” She was welcomed and comforted. Then she said: “I came in this afternoon because I had to be with Christians for a little while. If you are busy, don’t bother about me. Just let me sit with you. I won’t even talk. I just want to be with you.”

These are little incidents from the lives of two Muslim girls. They show how hard it is for them to come to believe in the Lord Jesus, and how hard is the way when they want to follow Him. Will you who read this pray for them and ask God to give them courage to confess, and His protection and guidance in the hard times that follow.

*Elizabeth Neill*

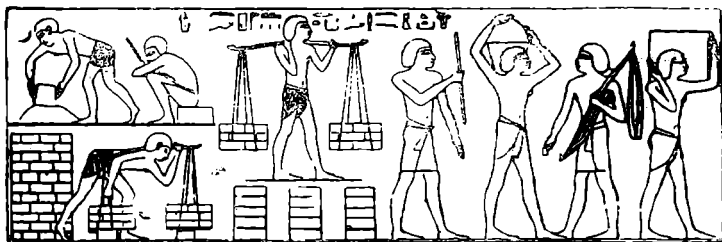
*(British Syrian Mission).*



# Hassan Learns to Build

## Part 1

Hassan met the Missionary as he came along the drive from the Mission house carrying a measuring tape, a mallet, some wooden pegs and, sticking out of his pocket, a piece of paper which Hassan rightly guessed must be a sketch of a building. That meant that they must be going to build something. Hassan was curious to know what it was going to be. All through the Summer men had been making bricks,



just as they have been made in Egypt for thousands of years. They had first of all made heaps of dirt, hollowed out in the centre like a volcano—very much extinct, of course—and then filled them up with water, and scattered a lot of chaff over them. They left it like that for three or four days to “ferment,” as the men said, then added a lot more chaff, and mixed it all up together. Then they had carried this sticky mud and chaff off to the flat place where the men were moulding bricks. They had wooden boxes without tops or bottoms, but with a piece of one side sticking out for a “handle,” in which to mould the bricks. They took up a handful of mud and pushed it into the mould on the ground, and then lifted up the mould, and there was a mud brick!

They worked quickly, and each man could make about 2,000 of these bricks a day if he worked hard. After the sun had been shining hard on them for a few days, the men had come along and turned all the bricks on to their sides. A few more days in the sun, and then they were stocked up in rows ready for use. There they were now, thousands of them, soon to be built into something—what? Hassan did not

know, but he was soon to find out.

“Hassan, I want you to come and help me a moment,” the Missionary called to him. Hassan promptly dropped what he was doing and came across. Building was always such interesting work. You could “see” something for what you were doing. It wasn’t like feeding grown-up cows for instance. They never seemed to get much bigger however much you fed them, and there wasn’t much to see for the work put in. Of course if you didn’t feed them they got thinner, but that was different. But building! Why every day you could see a difference!

They stopped alongside the garage and the Missionary put the pegs and mallet on the ground and pulled out the “plan.”

“What are you going to build?” Hassan enquired eagerly.

“Chicken houses!”

“*Chicken houses?*” Hassan emphasised each word, “What do chickens want houses for? You foreigners are funny. You build a better building than we live in, for the cows; then you build special boxes for the bees; now you want to build houses for chickens! I don’t see why they can’t run about the house like they do in our village, or at most, put them in cages.”

“Well there are several reasons for that, Hassan. First of all, of course, we are trying to teach people to keep their houses clean, as you know, and it doesn’t help to keep them clean if the chickens are running all over the place, does it? Then, I think we can produce much better chickens, and more and larger eggs if we give the ‘chickens’ proper places to live in, don’t you?”

“Maybe,” said Hassan, rather dubiously, “But do we need to have ‘plans,’ and measure things, and everything, just for chicken houses?”

“Perhaps we don’t *need* to, but it’s always wise to have plans for everything in life, Hassan, even chicken houses. When you have a plan you know what you are aiming at, and it saves a lot of time to have things all worked out beforehand. Now I have a plan here and I know just how long I want these houses, and how wide, and high. I know where I want the doors and where the wire comes, and where we have bricks: I know just how many bricks I need, how much wire

and how much wood, and I know just about how much it is all going to cost, and whether or not we have enough money. You know, the Bible tells us how foolish it is to start building unless you have made plans and worked out the cost, so that you know whether or not you have enough to finish the work. The Lord Jesus, of course, was not thinking only about buildings when He said that—at least not buildings of brick and timber—He was thinking of men's lives. How important it is for us to have a plan in life, even for little things, and how important it is for us to reckon up the cost! When the Lord said these things He was thinking particularly of men and boys who say, 'Oh yes, I will follow Jesus' without thinking how much it is going to 'cost' them to do it, and afterwards when they find out, they decide not to go on with it. Jesus says that sort of thing is like building a house and leaving it half-finished. It is important, too, to have a plan in life even for small things. Do you know that I have a plan for each day? Yes, I do, a time to get up, a time to spend in prayer and reading the Bible, a time to eat, and for everything I do in the day. That saves me from wasting a lot of time."

"You have a plan for us, too!" said Hassan with a mischievous grin, "We have to get up and feed the animals, and milk them, and come to prayers, and cut the feed—and everything, just when you say so."

"Yes, and not only do we have a daily plan, of course, for all the little things, but we plan ahead, too. We like to think of what we may be, not only of what we are, and to plan everything to fit in with that. You see when we planned this farm, long before we started to build these chicken houses, we knew where we were going to build them, and we know now, where we want to put all the other buildings we are going to build in the future. We may make some little changes later on, but we have a plan to which to work even now. I think that God wants us to plan our lives ahead, too, don't you? When people who want to build buildings don't know anything about building, they call in a man called an Architect, who knows all about it, to do it for them. We have an 'Architect,' who knows all about our lives, too, haven't we? And He can plan them for us. Yes, you're right! It is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!"

A. Whitehouse

(*Egypt General Mission*).