

SUNRISE IN SYRIA

A Short History of the British Syrian Mission,
from 1860 to 1930.

BY
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Hon. General Secretary.

With a Foreword by
The Rev. S. M. ZWEMER, D.D.

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CONTENTS

Foreword

Introduction

Chapter I. The Field

Syria. Its Peoples, Religion and Languages. Mohammedans. Druzes. Maronites.

Chapter II. 1860, The Beginning of the Work

The Massacres of 1860. Mrs. Bowen Thompson. Her Character. Her Call to Syria. Letter from English Ladies. Foundation of the Mission.

Chapter III. 1861-1869, Development of the Work

Schools. Extension of the Work. Royal Interest. Work among Moslems. Lack of Funds. Home Branches. Death of Mrs. Bowen Thompson.

CHAPTER IV. 1870-1891, MRS. MENTOR MOTT, DIRECTRESS

Mrs. Bowen Thompson's Sisters. Progress in the Field. Difficulties. Hadji Hassan. Work at Home. Death of Mrs. Mentor Mott.

Chapter V. 1892-1895, Miss James, Directress

An Interregnum. Miss James. The Bible Mission. 1895. Death of Miss James.

Chapter VI. 1896-1909, Miss Thompson, Directress

Miss Thompson. Progress of the Work, Muallim Selim Kessab. Revolution in Turkey. Work at Home. Resignation and Death of Miss Thompson.

Chapter VII. 1910-1914, Pre-war Days

Miss Johnston. Progress of the Work. Gideon Aoud. A Retrospect.

Chapter VIII. 1914-1918, War

Outbreak of War. Withdrawal of Missionaries. Conditions in Syria. Carrying on, Miss Kendall. Missionary Exiles. Deliverance.

Chapter IX. Stray Treads

Management of the Mission. Magazine. Financial Policy. Founder's Day. A Woman's Mission? Theological Basis.

Chapter X. The Mission Stations

Beyrout, Hasbeiya, Zahleh, Damascus, Ainzahalta, Tyre, Baalbec, Shimlan.

Chapter XI. 1919-1929, A Fresh Start

Aftermath of War. The Work Re-opens. Changed Conditions. French Mandate. The Druze Rebellion. Progress of the Work. The Home Base. Overseas.

Chapter XII. 1930- ? The Future

"REMEMBER SYRIA," by Constance Lady Coote

FOREWORD.

By The Rev. S. M. ZWEMER, D.D.

Here is the fascinating record of a corporate life that stretches over "three score years and ten." But these years were not spent "as a tale that is told," neither was their strength "labor and sorrow," but the joy of achievement. It is the story of brave women who hid the leaven of the Kingdom in the lives of Syrian womanhood until their intellectual, social, and moral outlook, in threefold measure, were leavened by Christ.

These British women, with undaunted faith, and undiscourageable hope and unrelenting love, overcame every kind of obstacle and even conquered the indifference to their ideals at home and abroad. It is a great story.

At Jerusalem the International Missionary Council engaged in learned and invaluable discussions on the definition, the method, and the goal of Religious Education. Here we enter the laboratory and see for ourselves the power of the Endless Life to transform and transfigure character through Christian schools. Read the chapters and thank God for founders and pioneers with such clear vision and uncompromising principles.

Syria has always had its noble women. Many of the early names are recorded in the Bible. But the blight of Islam for centuries rested on Syrian womanhood and childhood, and robbed them of their best heritage. The story of this small but important Mission is that of foreigners who tried to restore the heritage. Their lives blossomed red, and they remind us of that striking phrase in the second book of Kings: "And it fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem *where was a great woman.*" Such lives are endless, and their influence abides for ever. The author stands close to his work without letting his own shadow fall on the picture.

I have read the proof pages with deep interest.

S. M. ZWEMER.

*Cairo,
August 6th, 1929.*

INTRODUCTION

There must have been few things, the smooth progress of which was not violently interrupted by the Great War of 1914-18, and the British Syrian Mission was no exception to the general rule. Its missionaries were ordered to leave the shores of Syria, and only one of them, Miss M. E. Kendall, was able to remain there throughout those troublous times. When at length peace was declared the Mission had practically to be restarted in the field, and the same was true of the work at home. Not only had many of its old friends been called to Higher Service, but the tremendously enhanced cost of maintaining the work in the field necessitated a widespread campaign, not only in the British Isles but Overseas as well, in order to obtain sufficient funds. The result has been that numerous fresh friends have been enlisted, but, although they have been led to support the work from hearing of the present needs, and have indeed come to love the Mission for its own sake, they have little idea of how it came into existence, or of the heritage we have in the great traditions handed down to us by its Founders. It seems well, then, on the completion of seventy years work that we should glance back on the years that are gone, and should record for the information of those who are now our friends and supporters, and of others who in the future will become such, the salient features of the work.

This little sketch is not of course in any way an exhaustive history of the Mission. Indeed, only such details of the work have been given as may serve to show the spirit in which it has been carried on and the measure of success attained. The Mission publications teem with interesting accounts of its activities, and it would have been easy to fill the book with such stories, to the exclusion of any other matter. But the writer had before him the twofold object, firstly, of putting on record for the benefit of supporters certain facts concerning the start, growth, personnel, and character of the Mission; and, secondly, of endeavouring to interest those to whom it is at present no more than a name. An attempt has therefore been made - with what success the reader may judge - to steer a middle course between the bare rehearsal of names, figures and dry facts, which might instruct but would not interest, and the mere recital of countless stories, which might interest but would not instruct. No mention has been made even of the names of the majority of splendid workers, European and Syrian, some with us, others gone before, to whom under God the success of the Mission has been due. The intention throughout has been historical rather than biographical, and the occurrence of names is only incidental to the facts related. As an exception, a few details concerning the life and character of some of the leaders have been given, in order that the reader might know what manner of people they were.

It must not be thought that the B.S.M. is the only Mission at work in Syria. The largest and oldest Mission is the Syria Mission of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., which has work in many centres. In Damascus the Irish Presbyterian Mission works among the Jews, while the Edinburgh Medical Mission has a fine hospital there. In Brummana the "Friends" are at work, while here and there other messengers of the Gospel are to be found. But the B.S.M. is the largest British Mission, and its scope is limited only by the lack of funds and workers.

The bulk of the material in the following pages has been culled, and in some cases copied, from the literature of the Mission, while other details and statistics have been taken from the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and from "The Historical Geography of the Holy Land," by Sir George Adam Smith, D.D., "The Religions of Modern Syria and Palestine," by Fred. Jones Bliss, Ph.D., and "Fifty-three Years in Syria," by Henry H. Jessup, D.D., to whom acknowledgments are tendered.

Thanks are also due to Miss Florence L. Bond for valuable help in passing the book through the Press.

In the striking poem which she has very kindly contributed, and with which the book concludes, Lady Coote bids us "Remember Syria." And the advice is surely timely. "His fame," we are told, "went throughout all Syria," and Syria was the land in which the Apostle Paul first saw the Light. He was the first Christian missionary to Western lands, and it is surely true to say that from Syria we ourselves received the Gospel. Remember Syria, then, and the debt we owe her! Remember Syria, and her need to-day! "Remember" too "the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, it is more blessed to give than to receive."

J. D. MAITLAND-KIRWAN.

CHAPTER I.

The Field.

Syria.

Syria is frequently mentioned in the Bible, but the actual name "Syria" is not found in the Hebrew original of the Scriptures. It was used by the Septuagint to translate "Aram," the country of the Aramaeans, a northern Semitic people who dwelt in Mesopotamia and west to the Euphrates - as far west as the Phoenician coast, and south to Damascus. "Syria," which some consider to be a shortened form of "Assyria," had not in fact any precise geographical significance, and included different territories at different times. The Roman province of Syria, for instance, extended from the Euphrates to Egypt, while Syria as it is to-day under the French Mandate is bounded on the west by the Mediterranean, on the south by Palestine and Transjordan, on the east by Iraq, and on the north by Turkey. Although its total estimated area is about sixty thousand square miles, a little more than England and Wales, yet its population is only from two and a half to three millions, for a great deal of desert land is included within its borders.

Its Peoples, Religions and Languages.

The bulk of the population so far as race goes is of the Semitic family, with a large admixture of immigrant Arabian blood, and may thus be said to be of more or less mixed origin. The religious types are also strongly divergent. Mohammedans, who are in the large majority, live side by side with Druzes, Jews, Christians, and other obscure sects. The Jews are found mainly in the large centres of population, such as Beyrout and Damascus, while the Christians are an important element, constituting perhaps as much as one-fifth of the total population. They belong to various churches such as the Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Maronite, Latin and Protestant. These Christians, who have sometimes been called "nominal" or "un-Gospelled" Christians, have in many cases just as much need of pure Gospel teaching as members of the other religions found in Syria.

As regards the language, the last traces of Aramaic are to be found in certain remote villages of Anti-Lebanon, and in the Syriac known to the priests, but the language in universal use is Arabic.

It will be well to give a few notes on the Mohammedans, Druzes and Maronites.

Mohammedan.

The Mohammedan religion was called by Mohammed himself "Islam," which denotes "Resignation to the Will of God" and the participle of the same Arabic verb, "Muslim" (in English usually spelt "Moslem"), is used for one who professes that religion. As there are many text books on Islam the subject will be dealt with but briefly here.

In the seventh century the church of the Byzantine Empire was torn with controversy regarding the Nature of Christ, and "while, in the passion for earnest thinking about Christ, the idea of right living in the Name and after the example of the meek and lowly Jesus was fast disappearing," writes Dr. Bliss, "in far away Arabia a great religious genius was burning with passion to make known, by persuasion or by force, the simple truth that God is One. In the spiritual lifelessness and the doctrinal divisions of Christianity lay the opportunity of Islam."* In A.D. 632 Islam had conquered Arabia, and soon after this "the whole of Syria and Palestine had come under Moslem sway, and under this sway, save for the

brief period of Crusading rule, these lands have remained for thirteen centuries." *”The Religions of Modern Syria and Palestine”

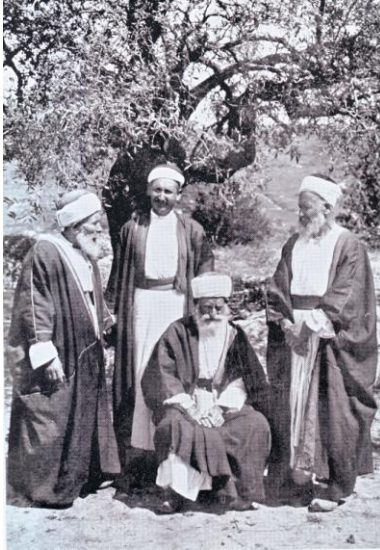
The sacred book of the Moslems is the Koran, which they believe to have been sent down from the highest heaven to the archangel Gabriel in the lowest, who in turn revealed it in sections to Mohammed. The acts of worship required by Islam are five in number - the recital of the Creed, observance of the five daily prayers, the fast in the month of Ramadhan, giving of the legal alms, and the pilgrimage to Mecca. According to the Koran Heaven - a sensual paradise - is the final destination of all Moslems, and Hell the eternal reward of all who reject Islam. The Moslem knows nothing of a Saviour from sin, and, although there are good men among all classes, the moral atmosphere is generally very bad; for a definitely inferior position is accorded to women, who are usually secluded in harems; a very low view of marriage prevails, child marriage, polygamy and temporary marriages being permitted; and divorce is practically at the caprice of the husband. The condition of the women and children is thus often pitiable, and "in such an atmosphere," says Dr. Bliss, "innocent children have a knowledge of vices unknown even by name to many adults in Western lands." In his book "Childhood in the Moslem World," to which readers are referred, Dr. Zwemer draws a graphic picture of the ills to which little children in Moslem lands are heir.

The Moslems are divided into two main sects, the "Sunnis" and the "Shiahs," or "Metawali" as they are called in Syria. The Koran teaches that "infidels," that is those not holding the Moslem faith, are enemies of all true believers, and declares a holy war against them. To confess Christ openly in baptism may mean, for a Moslem, death or, at any rate, bitter persecution.

Druzes.

The Druzes are not a large community, probably less than 150,000 in all, and although found scattered through Syria they are chiefly grouped in the southern part of the Lebanon and in the Hauran. Handsome, courageous, independent and hospitable, they are in many ways an attractive race, but they can be cruel and even treacherous. Druze women, who veil their faces closely, leaving only one eye uncovered, are treated with consideration, and polygamy is not practised. Divorce, however, is very common.

Regarding the details of their faith it is difficult to speak with confidence, for it is a secret one and is enshrined in their sacred books, which are said to consist of six volumes containing one hundred and eleven treatises. The origin of the name "Druze" is much disputed. Some authorities see in it a descriptive epithet derived from the Arabic *darasa* (those who *read* the Book), or *darisa* (those in *possession* of Truth), or *durs* (the *clever* or *initiated*); but more connect it with the name of the first missionary - Ismael Darazi.



Initiated Druzes

“A zeal of God, but not according to knowledge” (Romans 10.2)

At the beginning of the eleventh century there ruled in Egypt a mad Caliph, El Hakim, who professed to be an incarnation of the Deity. His claims were supported by Darazi, to whom, however, the people showed such bitter hostility that he fled to the Lebanon, where he succeeded in winning over some of the inhabitants to a belief in El Hakim. According to the Druzes this great conversion took place in A.D. 1019. Meanwhile the Caliph had found a more successful apostle in the person of Hamza, who gave form and substance to his creed, and enlisted an extensive body of adherents. When Hakim was assassinated, Hamza gave out that he had only withdrawn for a season and would triumphantly return. He then set about propagating the new faith, and Darazi, who had acted independently, was denounced by him as a heretic, and has ever since been held in detestation by the very sect which perhaps bears his name. Hamza is venerated, and is believed by the Druzes to be the author of their sacred books. The Druzes call themselves Unitarians, and believe that there is only one God, Who has revealed Himself in successive incarnations, of whom Hakim was the last. They hold the doctrine of the transmigration of souls from one human body to another, and believe that character determines whether the soul shall pass to a higher or to a lower human form. They believe that the number of Druzes never changes, and that the death of one person involves the birth of another.

The admission of converts to the Druze faith is not permitted, and the faithful are enjoined to keep their doctrines secret from the profane. Indeed only certain of them are fully initiated into the deeper mysteries of the creed, and these, who may be of either sex, are called *Akil* (wise). The *Akils* form about fifteen per cent of the total number of Druzes, and all the others are called *Jahel* (ignorant). The *Akils* are distinguished by the wearing of a white turban emblematic of the purity of their life. On Thursday evening, the commencement of the weekly day of rest, they meet together in their *Khalwas*, plain unadorned edifices, probably for the reading of their sacred books and for consultation on various matters. Prayer is said to form no part of the service. The uninitiated Druzes participate in no religious ceremony except the annual Feast.

One element in their religion which makes work among them difficult is that they are allowed to make outward profession of whatever religion is dominant around them. Among the Moslems they may live, and even worship, as Moslems, and among the Christians as Christians, but it is claimed that whatever the external appearance may be they are still at heart true to their own faith. But that there

have been, and are to-day, real heart converts to Christianity admits of no doubt. Miss Stowell, one of our missionaries now gone Home, tells of a Druze boy, with whom she was acquainted, who was converted and baptised. When he was journeying up the Lebanon one day he was accosted by a Druze man, who was his only companion, with the words "You area Druze!" "No, I am a Christian," he replied. "Oh, that is all very well among Christians," replied the Druze, "you may pretend you are one so long as you say once a year, holding up your hand, 'I am a Druze.' Now that you are alone with me hold up your hand, and tell me that you area Druze." "I cannot," replied the boy, "I am a Christian." "Take care what you say or I will throw you down the mountain; say 'I am a Druze.'" "No," came the answer once more, "I am a Christian," and the boy was knocked down and left for dead. He was not dead, however, and was rescued by some other travellers and taken to a place of safety. The boy's mother was a servant in Beyrout, and used to do her washing nearly all Saturday night in order that she might get to the Mission Bible Class on Sunday morning.

Maronites.

The original seat and present home of the nucleus of the Maronites is Mount Lebanon, though they are found in considerable numbers else where even as far afield as the U.S.A. – and they form today the largest and most compact Christian body in Syria. They took their name either from an early patriarch, John Maro, or from a saint, Marun, who is supposed to have established a monastery at the source of the Orontes in the fifth century, but about whom little definite is known. Originally a Syrian church in language and ritual they were received into the Roman Communion at the Council of Florence in 1445. The Maronite church to-day differs little from the Church of Rome, except that it retains its Syriac liturgy and, theoretically, a non-celibate priesthood; but, although priests may still be ordained after marriage, marriage is not permitted subsequent to ordination, nor does it any longer usually precede it.

The power of the various Roman Catholic orders in the Lebanon region is great, and nearly one-sixth of the land belongs to the monasteries of the various churches, over four-fifths of this property being Maronite.

CHAPTER II.

1860, The Beginning of the Work.

The Massacres of 1860.

The story of the massacres of 1860 has often been told. The Lebanon mountains were the richest part of Syria, and the mass of the inhabitants were either Druzes or Maronites. For reasons into which for lack of space we cannot enter there had been a bitter spirit between these two peoples for years, issuing in spasmodic outbreaks from time to time, and culminating in the terrible events. In that year fierce fighting took place in the Lebanon and elsewhere; the Moslems made common cause with the Druzes; and the Christians of the Maronite and other churches suffered unspeakable atrocities.

As typical of what occurred in many other places a short account may be given of the massacre of Christians at Hasbeiya in the Anti-Lebanon. When on June 3rd, 1860, a Druze force surrounded the town the Christians demanded protection from the Turkish Governor. He told them to go out and defend themselves; but after fighting all day they returned and took refuge in the spacious Seraia, a castle which had been built years ago by the Crusaders, and which was at that time the residence of the Turkish Governor. The Governor was in constant conference with Sitt Naifeh, who was the sister of the Druze Commander-in-Chief, and in many ways a remarkable woman. After consulting the Turkish Governor demanded and obtained the unconditional surrender of the Christians, to whom he gave a written guarantee pledging the faith of the Government for their personal safety. Their arms were given up under the supervision of Sitt Naifeh, and, though packed on mules as if they were to be taken to Damascus, they were in fact divided among the Druzes.

The Christians now underwent the double misery of imprisonment and starvation; but help was at hand. In response to representations from the Christian Bishops and European Consuls in Damascus the Governor of that city ordered a Druze Sheikh to proceed to Hasbeiya with one hundred and fifty horsemen, and to bring all the Christians to Damascus. He duly arrived at Hasbeiya, and the Christians were overjoyed to hear of the prospect of their speedy release from the Seraia, but they had reckoned without Sitt Naifeh. She affirmed that she had explicit orders from her brother that not a Christian male from seven to seventy years of age was to be left alive, and, in spite of expostulation, her wishes carried the day. The soldiers drove the Christians into the central courtyard of the Seraia, beating and stabbing them, and tearing off their clothes, and then, the gates being thrown open, the Druzes rushed in with a loud yell. The butchery was soon complete, and eight hundred mangled corpses lay piled on each other. But the darkness of this foul deed was not unrelieved by acts of heroism. It is recorded of one Protestant elder who perished with the others that, seeing the impending fate of all, he stood up and prayed for them and for their Druze enemies. "In Thy Name Lord Jesus," he cried, but his murderer responded "Call upon your Jesus and see whether He can help you now. Do you not know that God is a Druze?" and he cut him down with a battle-axe. As a general principle the Druzes when they make war never touch women, and the result of this bloodshed in various parts of the country was that thousands of widows and orphans were left defenceless. They fled to the nearest sea ports, where warships from various nations were already arriving. English and French squadrons took up stations off Beyrout in July, and in August a French military expedition landed. A mixed commission of European powers, in which England was represented by Lord Dufferin, laboured to restore order, and charitable contributions from European countries flowed in, an Anglo-American Committee being formed for the management of the funds.

Mrs. Bowen Thompson.

But in times of trouble something more than mere material help is called for, and the instrument used of God to bring spiritual comfort to many a heart that sorely needed it was an English lady - Mrs. Bowen Thompson. From a child Elizabeth Lloyd, as her maiden name was, had been religiously inclined, and as her Christian life matured she began to take a special interest in the Holy Land. When, therefore, she married Dr. James Bowen Thompson, and business claims called him first to Constantinople and then to Antioch, she gladly accompanied him, and began her Bible work in that city where the disciples were first called Christians. A large Bible class of Turkish, Jewish, and Armenian girls, who came to her to learn sewing and embroidery, and whom she also taught the Scriptures, and frequent visits to the harems of the Moslem ladies, gave her experience which was to be of the utmost value to her in the future.



Mrs. Bowen Thompson
Foundress of the British Syrian Mission

“A great woman” (2 Kings 4. 8)

“Full of good works” (Acts 9. 36)

After eighteen months residence at Antioch Dr. Thompson left for the Crimea on the outbreak of war there, in order to place his medical services at the disposal of the military authorities. Almost immediately on his arrival he succumbed to a malignant fever, and after a month's illness, during which his wife was constantly with him, he passed away. Mrs. Bowen Thompson returned to England, and found a happy home with her sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Mentor Mott, at their house at East Combe Park.

Her Character.

To read the Reports of the B.S.M. is to realise how largely its work throughout the years has been influenced by the character of the remarkable lady who became its Foundress, and it will be well therefore to give a few glimpses of the manner of woman she was, culled from a biographical sketch written by her sister Mrs. Smith.

As a child she knew what it was to love God, and the study of His Word induced in her a strong and

simple faith. She would seat herself in a sunny window and, unbidden, commit to memory large portions of Scripture, and the wonderful Bible narratives riveted both her heart and mind, and made her yearn to see the scenes of those stupendous miracles. The history of Joseph had a special attraction, and this was increased by hearing her father explain the history of the Rosetta Stone, which had been discovered in Egypt by a cousin; and to visit the British Museum and gaze upon this very stone was for her the most charming of holidays. When visiting friends in Scotland she came under the influence of the great revival there. A new and glorious light brightened and intensified her inner life, and she realised as never before "the power of His Resurrection." She grasped in all its fulness the blessed assurance of a present Salvation, the blotting out of transgressions, and adoption into the family of God; truths full of sanctifying comfort to which she ever clung, and which filled her with a peace which never left her. Her life indeed became such that even her own sister was able to write of her "I never remember one inconsistent word or act of hers, never an unkind or unchristian one."

From her youth prayer and strong faith in its power were the hidden source of her energy. "We have had some marvellous answers to prayers within the last fortnight," she wrote in 1859, and prayer became the very foundation of her work in Syria. In the Report for 1864, for instance, she wrote "Oft times our resources are all but exhausted, when in answer to prayer the Lord never fails to supply our wants." But her ruling passion was soul winning. "She had but one object," wrote her sister, "- to bring souls to Christ," and she was one who believed in sudden conversion. "The 3rd January," she writes in one of her letters, "was a day of holy solemnity and joy to my soul. While reading and praying with a gay young serjeant, the husband of one of my mother's class, who was on the eve of going to China, the Lord was pleased suddenly to turn him from darkness to light. From that moment he became a changed man. His companions, the theatre where he acted, were at once given up; his vile books burnt; pardon sought from those he had ridiculed for their piety. He at once became an earnest student of his Bible, and the result is the formation of a Bible class on board the 'Himalaya,' now going out to China; several men have become earnest enquirers since. Oh, I have seen many men in the last two weeks under a deep concern for their souls."

A spur to her efforts to win souls was the thought of the Lord's Personal return - the great hope of the Church which drew her still more closely to that "Pleasant Land" where His feet shall stand on the Mount of Olives." The mind is strongly impressed, "she wrote in the Report for 1868," with the conviction that 'the time of our redemption draweth nigh' ours may be but a brief working day to prepare a people for their Lord."

And yet she was no mystic, but a woman of practical common sense, of steadfast purpose and abounding energy. Her friends used to say that she "knew how to manufacture time," and her favourite motto was "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Yet she always found leisure for friendly intercourse, and never seemed pressed for time; and her sweet and even temperament, her undisguised sincerity and her evident understanding at once enlisted confidence. "Many is the heart," wrote her sister, "which first unbosomed to her its trials, and from her learned to lay on Jesus its burdens and its cares." Such was the woman whom God raised up for the crisis of 1860.

Her Call to Syria.

The distress consequent upon the massacres made an immediate appeal to Mrs. Bowen Thompson. Herself a widow, she knew the only true remedy for sorrow - the Word of God with all its quickening

and consoling power. She said that the Lord had strongly impressed upon her that He had a work for her in Syria, and she had cried out in answer to that call "Here am I, send me." In spite of many discouragements and continued ill-health she sailed for Syria, after being set apart for the work by prayer at the house of the Rev. William Pennfather of Barnet, afterwards so well known in connection with Mildmay. Arriving in Beyrout on October 27th, 1860, she was advised to return to Europe by the next steamer, for it was feared that her mission - that of binding up the broken-hearted by the consolations of the Gospel - might bring not peace but a sword. But she had accepted her mission as from the Lord, and although crippled by ill-health she never wavered. Lord Dufferin and others showed her much kindness, and at length she was enabled to obtain a house, which, together with her work, she dedicated to the Lord. This house eventually, became, and remains to-day, the Headquarters of the Mission in Syria. It was known for many years as "The Institution or "The Training Institution," and later on as "The British Syrian Training College."

Letter from English Ladies.

But it was not only Mrs. Bowen Thompson's heart which had been touched by the sufferings of the women of Syria, and a manifesto signed by Letter from fifty-four well-known English ladies English ladies and printed in Arabic was largely circulated in Syria. As this may almost be considered an historic document we give it in full.

Dear Friends,

"Your sisters in England feel a deep and loving interest in your welfare, and they want to tell you so. They want you to know that while you are shedding bitter tears over your blighted hopes and your desolate homes, there are hearts that sympathise with you and eyes that weep for you in this far-distant land.

"We have heard of your crushing sorrows. The wail of lamentation from Syria's shores has entered into British ear; and while we look into the pages of our Holy Book, and read the words so full of meaning, 'Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep,' we long to give you more than empty sympathy, and we ask, 'What can the women of England do for the women of Syria?'

"We love your land; for our own blessed Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, lived and died there. We love your children; and though this heavy cloud of sorrow has darkened their early years, we feel that they may yet be prosperous, and privileged and happy.

"We look around us at all the bounteous gifts which make our own homes bright and joyous, and we long to share them with you. We want to help you - to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the houseless. We want to give bread to the hungry, and water to the thirsty, and medicine to the sick.

"But when all this is done, we have still the choicest blessing left. We have THE BOOK which comforts us in our troubles, and guides us in our perplexities, and teaches us how to bear our burdens, and perform our duties, and instruct our children; and we think, 'Could not this Book, which has done so much for England, do much for Syria, and for Syria's weeping daughters?'

"Dear friends, will you accept it at our hands? Will you listen to its words of hope and peace, comfort and salvation? It has a message for you, and a message for your children. Will you let them read it? and will you clasp it to your bosom as a loving gift from England, or, rather, from England's God ?

"Mrs. Thompson - now at Beyrout, a member of the Syrian Relief Committee - one of our number, is gone forth to visit you, and many earnest prayers from earnest hearts have followed heron her way. We are sure you will receive her as a friend, and love her as a sister.

"Commending you to Him Who is the God of Heaven and earth, and the Protector of all who put their trust in Him, we remain yours sympathising friends."

Foundation of the Mission.

Space forbids us to follow in detail Mrs. Bowen Thompson's early labours. Her first act was to gather in her house over thirty women, widowed as a result of the massacre at Hasbeiya, and to teach them work of various kinds. Work was always preceded by Bible reading and prayer, and they were soon able to sing together in Arabic the first verse of the hymn *"My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary."* Thus from the very first the teaching of the Cross was given a prominent place. It was not long, however, before she saw the necessity of adopting the plan, which had already been proposed, of forming an Association in England for the support of the work, and in November she wrote definitely asking that such an Association should be started. Accordingly a meeting was held at the house of the Hon. Arthur Kinnaird in London, at which the Mission was formally constituted under the patronage of Lord Shaftesbury, who afterwards became its Chairman. The Hon. Mrs. Kinnaird was appointed President; General Clarke, Treasurer; and Mrs. Henry Smith (Mrs. Thompson's sister), Secretary; while Mrs. Alexander and Mrs. Mentor Mott (another of Mrs. Thompson's sisters) formed the nucleus of the first Committee. The title of the Mission in its early days was "Ladies' Association for the Social and Religious Improvement of the Syrian Females." The mention of "Schools" and "Bible Mission" crept into the title, and in 1876 it was called "British Syrian Schools and Bible Mission for the Social and Religious Improvement of the Syrian Females," while in 1882 a shorter form, "British Syrian Schools and Bible Mission," was used. The title "British Syrian Mission" gradually took its place, and has been in use for many years now.

CHAPTER III.

1861-1869, Development of the Work.

Schools.

Although Mrs. Thompson went out to work among the refugees, she had not been in Beyrout a week before she saw the necessity of starting a school. The cook of the hotel where she was staying desiring to be taught, the master of the hotel promised that if she would start an evening school he himself would be the first pupil! Grateful for the opportunity, she at once went to the Printing Press to secure a good Arabic teacher, characteristically insisting that his chief qualification should be "a love for souls." Such an one was obtained, and every evening he taught the men and boys. Thus the first B.S.M. school was started. This was followed by a Sewing Class, and in explaining to the pupils the principles on which the work would proceed, principles which are still in force to-day, she made it clear that "the Bible was the foundation of our faith and work, and although there would be women of different creeds they would hear nothing that would give offence, and at the same time they would be led to love that Saviour Who had died for them."

Various other schools, including industrial schools, were gradually opened, and Selim Kessab, a Christian young man from Damascus, was engaged to act as interpreter, visit the parents, instruct the servants and conduct Arabic family worship. This man had a far-reaching influence in the Mission for many years, and to-day his daughter has a school of her own in Beyrout.

Extension of the Work.

Although Mrs. Thompson's original intention was to remain in Syria for six months, she seems gradually to have made up her mind to stay there, and she soon began to think of extending the work. Petitions for teachers commenced to come in from many places, and schools were gradually opened in the important centres of Hasbeiya in 1862, Zahleh in 1864, Damascus and Ainzahalta in 1867, and Tyre in 1869, as well as in other places, while in 1868 a Blind School was opened in Beyrout. The building which was to become the "Institution" was purchased outright in 1863, an upper storey added and a garden secured, while various improvements made in later years have brought it to its present condition. A few girl boarders were immediately taken in with a view to being trained as teachers. In connection with the establishment of a school at Hasbeiya it is interesting to note that Sitt Naifeh, who was largely responsible for the massacre, expressed to Mrs. Thompson her approval of the project, and promised to encourage and protect the school. She afterwards helped forward the building of the school house, and among the pupils were members of her own family. Mrs. Thompson soon saw that it was inadvisable to offer free schooling to all, and she writes in the report for 1865 that the system of payment of school fees according to their several ability was in full force. This system was after a time discontinued, but later on it was revived, and has been in force for many years now.

The establishment of these schools was carried out in spite of opposition from the Roman Catholic priests. The schools were frequently denounced at the altar, Holy Communion was refused to the parents of children attending, Bibles were burned, and other measures taken, but all in vain, for the work grew rapidly. Nor were Mrs. Thompson and her friends at home the only ones who took an interest in these schools, for the funds for commencing one of them, called the Olive Branch School, were contributed by the officers and men of H.M.S. Mars, who were all much interested in the work

and frequently visited the Institution in Beyrout which, as Mrs. Thompson wrote in 1868, was beginning more and more to carry out its mission of raising up a body of native teachers. "One great desideratum," she had stated in 1867, "is thoroughly trained native teachers, because if the land is to be evangelized it must be by native agency, especially the agency of women, the future wives, mothers, and teachers of Syria." She saw, moreover, the need not only of teachers but of Bible women to visit in the homes; these she trained herself and their successors are at work in Syria to-day.



A Bible Woman

Royal Interest.

The question may be asked whether permission to open Christian Schools was easily obtained while Syria formed part of the Turkish Empire, the very seat of Islam. The answer is that difficulties which might otherwise have arisen were prevented through the granting of an Imperial Firman by the Sultan at the personal request of the Prince of Wales, afterwards King Edward VII., who, when visiting Syria in the year 1862, honoured the Mission with a visit under the following circumstances. Landing at Beyrout and going in procession through the town, the Prince passed the wall of our school, along which our women and children were ranged. Hearing them sing "God save the Queen" in Arabic he enquired who they were, and next morning sent a message to say he would visit the school that afternoon. Received by Mrs. Bowen Thompson, he charmed everyone by his kindness and courtesy, and expressed great interest in all he saw. The women, whose needlework and gold embroidery he much admired, sang the hymn "How sweet the Name of Jesus sounds," and read the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, while the schools joined in the hymn "Around the Throne of God in Heaven thousands of children stand!" Mrs. Bowen Thompson explained that many had learned not only to read but to value the Bible, and to know the power of prayer.

This visit seemed to leave a real impression on the Prince's mind, for not only did he send a generous gift to the funds, but in 1867 he graciously commended the British Syrian Schools to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan during his visit to England, which resulted in the granting of the Imperial Firman above referred to, under which the work was carried on in undisturbed security as long as Syria formed part of the Turkish Empire. Further, in 1882, when Prince George (now H.M. King George V.) and Prince Albert Victor (afterwards Duke of Clarence) were cruising in H.M.S. Bacchante it was at the express desire of their father that they visited the Training Institution at Beyrout. Their visit,

which curiously enough took place twenty years to the very day after that of the Prince of Wales, also left delightful memories, and the Royal names have an honoured place in our Visitors' Book at Beyrout. When Her Majesty-Queen Mary visited the London offices in 1926, and was told of these incidents, she expressed great interest, and graciously consented to write her name in the London Visitors' Book.

Work among Moslems.

Although Mrs. Thompson came out to work among the Christian refugees, yet her consuming zeal to proclaim the Gospel Message led her from the outset to take an interest in the Moslems, and it is noteworthy that the B.S.M. was the honoured instrument in God's hand in *originating* schools for Moslem girls in Syria. From the first the little Moslem girls became pupils in the day schools, but it was some five years before Moslem parents allowed their children to come as boarders. The fact that when these girls reached the age of thirteen or fourteen they were not allowed to be sent to an open school, where they would be seen by men, led Mrs. Thompson to start a secluded school to which they still might go.

Nor was work in the harems neglected. The harem is the part of a house which in Moslem countries is set apart for the women. Here they are shut out not merely from the sight of, and therefore from all interchange of thought with, the opposite sex, but their very faces and persons are enshrouded from ordinary gaze. Work among the Moslem ladies in these harems was commenced by Mrs. Thompson as early as 1860, and some of the highest ladies in the land came under her influence.

Lack of Funds.

Even in the first few months of the Mission Mrs. Bowen Thompson was faced with the problem which has never ceased to make itself felt, and here her faith in a prayer-answering God stood her in good stead. "I was at this time greatly distressed for funds," she wrote in June, 1861 "I had nothing to pay my widows for their weekly earnings." She told them that she had no money for them, and they all united in prayer to their Heavenly Father Whose open hand had hitherto supplied all their needs. Soon afterwards she had a visit from some Turkish ladies who, on leaving, gave her a little bundle of money containing about a hundred small coins, which on being counted were found to amount to the exact sum due to the widows. Indeed, it was apparently this continued experience of the Lord's provision in answer to prayer that led to the adoption of the words "Jehovah-jireh" as the motto of the Mission "I think we ought to have the text 'The Lord will provide,' engraved in marble," wrote one of the teaches in 1865," and placed over the great gate; for it I and always has been, our watchword, our comfort and our hope - the foundation on which the school stands."

Home Branches.

Recognising that if the work was to be maintained and extended a regular supply of funds must be available Mrs. Thompson visited England in 1865, in order that she might stir up interest in the Mission at home and her zeal and Christian devotion raise up many new friends, whose liberality enabled her largely to extend the field of her operations. Thus early in the history of the Mission there came to be recognised the principle that, if the work in the field is to prosper, missionaries must be prepared to speak at meetings at home Influential Committees were formed in Glasgow and Edinburgh in 1866, and Branches, or "Associations" as they were called, with honorary local secretaries were gradually established in various parts of the country.

Death of Mrs. Bowen Thompson.

Mrs. Thompson's incessant labours had the inevitable result of wearing down her strength, and in 1869 brought on the illness which was to prove fatal. But she had the satisfaction of seeing the Mission fairly established on the field and warmly supported by friends at home. There were already twenty three schools with fifty-six teachers and some seventeen hundred pupils, while seven Bible women were at work. As regards friends at home it is hard to realize, in the, days when the Mission seems so little known, that in its early days the work commanded the interest of so many influential persons.

The following for instance are a few names, taken at random from the reports, of those who, either in some official capacity, or as generous donors or supporters of individual girls in the schools, were active helpers of the Mission during the first twenty-five years of its existence: - Earl and Countess of Shaftesbury, Hon. Mrs. Baptist Noel, Hon. Mrs. Kinnaird, Hon. Mrs. Trotter, Hon. Miss Waldegrave, Countess of Aberdeen, Lady Victoria Buxton, Earl and Countess of Cavan, Marquis and Marchioness of Cholmondely, Lady Ellesmere, Marchioness of Exeter, Dowager Countess of Gainsborough, Countess Spencer, Duchess of St. Albans, Lord Clarence Paget, Marchioness of Ely, Lady Wolverton, Lady Dufferin, Lady Belper, Lady Alicia Blackwood, Hon. Alice Baring and a host of others, while a perusal of the subscription lists shows that in leading evangelical circles widespread interest had been aroused in the work.

But we may be sure that it was not the number of schools and pupils which rejoiced Mrs. Bowen Thompson's heart so much as the tangible results with which God had crowned her labours. As early as 1865 she was able to write that "the long neglected and despised Syrian woman is beginning to rise from her abject ignorance and degradation, and is manifesting in her life and conversation that she is what God made our first mother, a helpmeet for man. . . . Women and children who have been brought to a concern for their own souls take a delight in reading the Word of God for themselves and their neighbours. Little Syrian girls of nine and ten years old have become Bible readers to their parents."

And now that the work was to be resigned into the hands of others, that perfect dependence on the Will of God which had characterized her life, marked also its close. Perhaps the Lord may enable us to do some-thing "I feel the strongest confidence that God will provide the means" -" My heart is filled with love and praise as I contemplate the wonderful way the Lord my God had led me "- such sentences as these taken from her letters show that she always felt human help to be but secondary; so, too, when her course was nearly run she felt it was the Lord alone who could give her the rest she needed. "Rest, rest," she cried on February 1st, 1869, "this is what I often long for, but where to find it I know not, unless the Lord Himself lay His Hand upon me," and He Who has bid the weary and heavy laden come to Him for rest heard that cry, and ere the summer passed she was laid aside in bodily weakness.

But she never lost her faith. "Notwithstanding my great weakness," she said, "I have never for one instant lost my peace of mind or the sense of the presence of Jesus." A voyage to England was only of temporary benefit, and the news of her illness soon spread through England, Scotland and Ireland, and many prayers were offered for her recovery. She, too, would fain have lingered awhile in the country she loved. "I am ready to depart," she said, "yet long to abide a little longer to go back to my flock on the Lebanon." But it was not to be, and on November 14th, 1869, the Lord took His servant

Home. Her body was laid to rest by the side of her father and mother at Blackheath, but her soul was present with the Lord. "And now Lord," she had said in one of the last prayers she ever uttered, "let none of those who love me, and none of those who know me, ever think of me as going through the grave and death, but through the Gate of Glory." And who can doubt that through that same gate has passed many a Syrian soul who first heard the story of Redeeming Love from the lips, and through the faithful service, of Elizabeth Bowen Thompson.

CHAPTER IV.

1870-1891, Mrs, Mentor Mott, Directress.

Mrs. Bowen Thompson's Sisters.

The residence of Mr. and Mrs. Mentor Mott in England had been destroyed by fire in December, 1860, and they resolved to devote themselves to personal service in the Mission. They settled in Beyrout in 1861, where Mrs. Bowen Thompson had already been joined by her younger sister, Miss Lloyd. To these two sisters on her death-bed she bequeathed the charge of the Mission, and Mr. Mott also took an active interest in the work, aiding it with funds. In 1875 a third sister, Mrs. Henry Smith, who had been acting as Honorary Secretary at home, resolved to dedicate herself to the work, and joined her other sisters in Syria. In 1876 the sole control of the Mission was handed over to Mrs. Henry Smith and Mrs. Mentor Mott, when Mrs. Henry Smith became President, Mrs. Mott Directress, and Miss Lloyd Sub-Directress, an arrangement which continued until Mrs. Smith died in 1885 and Mrs. Mott in 1891.

Progress in the Field.

Space forbids us to speak in detail of the work accomplished during this period. New schools were opened and new areas visited, although the only new centre added was Baalbec, where work was started in 1874, invitations to undertake work at Antioch, Akka, and other places having to be refused owing to lack of funds. The Training Institution remained the "Heart of the Mission," and sent forth yearly a band of young Christian teachers to work in the various branch schools. Indeed in the preface to their report for 1875 the Committee stated that only lack of funds prevented their covering the whole of the Lebanon with a network of village schools. The Training Institution became for a time the recognised training school for the supply of teachers for the work of the Church Missionary Society in Palestine, and from its doors trained teachers have gone out to many different countries. The work of visiting the Moslem harems grew, and numbers of Jewish children came to the schools, especially in Beyrout and Damascus. The Bible continued to be the foundation of all the teaching, and the various reports from the Field testified to the continued blessing received. One remarkable fact which was continually mentioned in the reports, not only of this period but of after years as well, was that "out of many of our Moslem pupils who have been married to Moslem husbands not one has been divorced, nor has a second wife ever entered the harem." Seeing that in Syria a Moslem has only to repeat three times before witnesses the formula "I divorce thee" to make a divorce effective, and that Moslem women have a saying "I have had breakfast with my husband but I do not know whether I shall have supper with him," the fact mentioned above is eloquent of the change which Bible teaching was gradually introducing into Moslem homes. One, at any rate, of the objects of the Mission - "the *social* improvement of the Syrian females" - was being attained.

Difficulties.

The work during this period, although attended with much blessing, was by no means free from difficulties, of which cholera epidemics, shortage of funds, and bitter persecution from priests and nuns were not the least, but a more serious difficulty was beginning to manifest itself. In the early days of the Mission the Moslems had seemed to welcome the work, for they valued the opportunities for instruction which it offered to their women folk, and the consequent amelioration of conditions in the homes to which reference has already been made. But their religious fanaticism was only sleeping, and we read in the report for 1879 that "now the long dormant bigotry of the Moslems is putting forth

its antagonism to Christianity." This bigotry is still rampant in Syria to-day, and has prevented many a secret believer from openly confessing Christ.

Hadji Hassan.

But even in those early days there were some who braved death for the sake of Christ, and such an one was Hadji Hassan. He was a strict Mohammedan, and had made the pilgrimage to Mecca seven times. His wife belonged to the Greek Church, but was indifferent to religion. During a severe illness, when he was supposed to be dying and his family had sent for their Sheikh to offer the last prayers, Hassan saw in a vision a man in the garb of a Bedouin, who told him he would recover and henceforth be His servant; His hands were marked with scars, and He told Hassan that he was "Jesus the Son of God." This vision, which was some time after followed by another of a similar character, produced a vivid impression upon him, and he became a changed man. About this time his children were in one of the Infant Schools, and being visited by a Bible woman he listened to her with much interest, and attended both a prayer meeting and a Christian service. He met with violent persecution and was severely beaten, and the British Consul General before whom his case was brought promised to protect him in case of need. One morning he was seized by twelve soldiers and, after being cruelly beaten and dragged to prison, was sent to Damascus. On his arrival there he was thrown into jail; refreshments were offered him, but suspecting that they contained poison he refused them. He was then led to the edge of a deep well and his back pierced by one of the soldiers, so that he felt the blood trickling down to his feet. Yet he swerved not. "I am a Christian," he said, "I cannot deny my Lord, I will sooner die. If you throw me down the well I shall but meet Him all the sooner." Afterwards a box of gold coins was offered him if he would recant, but by the Grace of God he remained faithful. When brought before the highest Moslem ruler in the land he boldly confessed Christ crucified, and the ruler, probably on instructions from Constantinople, suddenly ordered his release, opened the door, and bade him go. Hassan passed unmolested between the Moslem soldiers, and hastened to the British Syrian School close to "the street which is called Straight," where several were gathered together in prayer. The joyful tidings of his release were conveyed to his wife and children in Beyrout, where he himself arrived soon afterwards, and a few days later he and his children were received by baptism into the Christian Church. They then left for Alexandria, whence satisfactory reports were from time to time received of them.

Work at Home.

Following Mrs. Bowen Thompson's example further efforts were made to extend interest in the work at home. In the year 1870 the first public meeting was held in London at the Hanover Square Rooms, under the presidency of the Earl of Shaftesbury, while in 1872 the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland had a meeting for the Mission at Stafford House, at which the Bishop in Jerusalem, Dr. Gobat, among others testified to the good work being done, and expressed his gratification on a recent visit to Beyrout to find the children so well grounded in Scripture. It is interesting to note that interesting Mr. Ira D. Sankey, many of whose hymns are great favourites with the Syrian children, was present at this meeting.

In the same year an office was taken in London for the conduct of the Society's business at 11, Buckingham Street, Strand. About 1879 the headquarters of the Mission was moved to Wimbledon, where it remained for many years. In 1871 was published a book entitled "The Daughters of Syria," by Canon Tristram of Durham. This book, which is not to be confused with the magazine which bears the same name, contained a selection of Mrs. Bowen Thompson's letters and gave a sketch of the

Mission until the time of her death.

The Hon. Mrs. Baptist Noel, who for some years had been President of the Mission, was succeeded by the following gentlemen, whose names are given in the order of their appointment - Bishop Barker of Sydney, Bishop Perry of Melbourne, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop Bickersteth of Exeter. They took the title either of Patron or President.

As a result of all these activities and of other meetings held in various places the Mission became more widely known. Branches were established in different parts of the country, and many British and foreign travellers visited the work in the field. Two interesting visitors were Bishop French of Lahore, who during eighteen months stay in Syria made our house at Beyrout his headquarters and entered warmly into the various departments of the work, and Bishop Hannington, who visited Syria in 1884, the year before his death. He became deeply interested in our work, and was surprised at its extent, and he wrote in the Visitors' Book at Beyrout these words - "I am deeply thankful for this wonderful work."

Death of Mrs. Mentor Mott.

Mrs. Mott died on August 31st, 1891, and on her deathbed she spoke to Dr. Jessup, the veteran Missionary of the American Presbyterian Mission, and told him her wishes about carrying on the schools and Bible work on the same basis as before. Amid many manifestations of sorrow and respect she was laid to rest at Aleih.

CHAPTER V.

1892-1395, Miss James, Directress.

An Interregnum.

No Directress was appointed immediately after Mrs. Mott's death, and her quiet wisdom and large experience were much missed, but the work went forward as usual, though not unattended with difficulties. Cholera again broke out in Damascus, and the attitude of the Turkish Government caused anxiety to all missionaries in the Ottoman Empire. The British Syrian Schools, however, working under the authority of an Imperial Firman, were safe from being closed, although there seemed to be considerable danger of the doors being shut owing to lack of funds.

Miss James.

It was in 1893 that Miss James of Wimbledon, who with her friend, Mrs. Hornby, was on a visit to the Mission in Beyrout, was offered and accepted the post of Directress. She was well-known for her devotion to missionary work all over the world, and her character seemed to render her singularly fitted for the post. She combined rare business capacity with many spiritual gifts. Rising at 5.0 a.m., she would consecrate two hours to Bible study and communion with the Master, and all through the following hours she was calm, wise, clear headed, often kneeling to ask wisdom from above, always ready to receive any who came with perplexing difficulties. None left her without feeling they had been with one who habitually walked with God.

The Bible Mission.

In 1892, the year between the death of Mrs. Mott and the appointment of her successor, there was a larger number of Bible women and Scripture readers in the Bible Mission than in any year before or since, namely thirty-one, and it will be well here to say something about that work, for the name "Bible Mission" still figures on the first page of every magazine.

About the year 1856 there was founded a Society called "The London Bible and Domestic Female Mission," the object of which was to provide Bible women for the homes of the poor in London. The Society also supported Bible women in other lands, and from, the first years of the B.S.M. it took an interest in Syria, and eventually supported quite a number of Bible women and Scripture readers there, accounts, of whose activities were sent to the magazine of the Society which was called "The Missing Link Magazine." These Bible women were known collectively as "the Bible Mission," and, even after the support from this and from other Societies which used to give us grants was no longer forthcoming, the name was still preserved.

In the early days Bible women were looked on with suspicion, especially by the Roman Catholics. In 1860, for instance, as a result of the massacres certain widows and orphans fled from Zahleh to Beyrout, where they had Bible teaching from Mrs. Bowen Thompson. When they were ordered by the Government to return to their homes they asked that a Bible woman should be sent them. This stirred up the enmity of the Jesuits, and they obtained an order to evict Mrs. Thompson from the Lebanon. The priests for three successive days walked in solemn procession round the town sprinkling holy water at the bidding, as they said, of the prophet Elijah, hoping that, like the Walls of Jericho, the English house would fall. But the people were firm, and said they would not be satisfied until they got a school and Bible Mission. Eventually Bible women were introduced and did quiet

steady work.

The work of a Bible woman is often uphill and frequently discouraging, but from time to time she is cheered by seeing definite results. One of the Beyrout Bible women was sent for in great haste to see a poor Druze woman who was dying, and to whom she had been in the habit of reading the Bible weekly. She always seemed attentive and learnt to pray, but the Bible woman was never able to see her alone. "Do not think I am a Christian," she would say, for the edification no doubt of her companions, "I am a Druze, and I shall die a Druze." But when on her death-bed she sent for the Bible woman it was a different story that she told. "I want to tell you before all these people," she said, "that I die a Christian. I love the Lord Jesus, I shall go to your Saviour. They, "pointing to her friends, "will give me a Druze burial, but I die a Christian. May God bless you and your Holy Book."

Not only the Christians of the Oriental churches and the Druzes are visited by members of the Bible Mission. There is today in Beyrout a Bible woman whose work lies solely among the Jews, and many reports from Miss Lord, for years superintendent of the Bible Mission in Tyre, and from others, tell of the work done among the Moslems. Miss Lord's reports speak in the highest terms of the activities of the Bible women in and around Tyre, and show that in many cases God was working. She tells, for instance, of an old Moslem woman who was among the listeners to the story of the Syrophenician woman, and who asked at the close whether the mother offered anything to the Lord Jesus for what He had done for her. On receiving the answer, she said "What an ungrateful woman! If Jesus Christ would only visit me I would at once kill for Him my best calf." When told that Christ desired first of all that sinners should believe in Him as Saviour, and love and trust Him, and that nothing man could offer would repay Him for His love, she replied "I know that every sect has its special prophet, and that Jesus Christ is the Christians' prophet, but I love Him and He is in my heart. Do you think that He loves me? Do you think that He will receive me though I am a Moslem woman?" "Praise God," adds Miss Lord, "we could tell her 'Yes, the Lord Jesus loves all and will receive all who come to Him, and believe in Him as Saviour and Lord.'"

1895.

To-day the Bible Mission has fewer members, but the need is the same and the Message the same. In this short sketch it is not possible to follow the details or the extent of the work, but, as the year 1895 concludes the first half of the seventy year period with which we are dealing, it will be well to give a summary of the report for that year. The chief Mission stations were Beyrout, Damascus, Hasbeiya, Ainzahalta, Zahleh, Baalbec and Tyre. In and around these were twenty-nine schools, ten of which were wholly or partly supported by individual friends, and were not therefore charges on the general funds. In these schools were 2,830 pupils, of whom 1,418 were members of the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic Churches, 365 were Roman Catholics, 149 Maronites, 181 Protestants, 289 Mohammedans, 18 Jews and Proselytes, and 410 Druzes. The average number of children in Sunday Schools was 1,191, and there were 5,140 dispensary patients. The Bible women and Scripture readers numbered 27, of whom 14 were supported by individuals or branches, and 11 were partly supported by grants given by the British and Foreign Bible Society. The number of European and Syrian teachers was 100, and the European staff 19, of whom 18 were ladies, the only man being Mr. Loytved, surveyor and accountant.

Death of Miss James.

This chapter is unfortunately a short one, for it seemed good to God, in His inscrutable wisdom, to

spare Miss James for only a brief period of service in Syria. The sense of loss when she had to give up the work was very keen, for, though Directress for less than three years, she had displayed just the qualities which were needed.

"We are greatly favoured of God in having so wise, so loving a Directress," wrote Mrs. Auriol-Barker, the Honorary Secretary at home, "who throws herself heart and soul into the Mission almost beyond her strength." The last four words proved prophetic, for in 1895 Miss James became seriously ill and was compelled to resign. She died in England in 1897.

CHAPTER VI.

1896-1909, Miss Thompson, Directress.

Miss Thompson.

Miss Caroline Thompson, whose name is still a house-hold word with many, left her home at Bideford to join the Mission in 1881, and was appointed Principal of the Beyrout Training Institution in 1882. Her report for 1881, written as superintendent of the training department, shows her aims to have been the same as those of her namesake, Mrs. Bowen Thompson, to whom however she was not related. In training the older girls as teachers she tried to impress on them that "while they do their utmost to give the best secular instruction in their power it should be their steady aim to try to bring their children to a saving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." That her training was successful appears from a letter from one of her old pupils, who wrote "Now when I teach I pray that I may be faithful, and I will try to do all my work for Jesus." But results sometimes followed immediately on the lesson, and she tells how one afternoon when the lesson had been on "Faith" one of the girls, who had been listening with fixed attention, exclaimed with an emotion she seemed unable to restrain, "From this moment I will trust Him! Yes, from this moment."

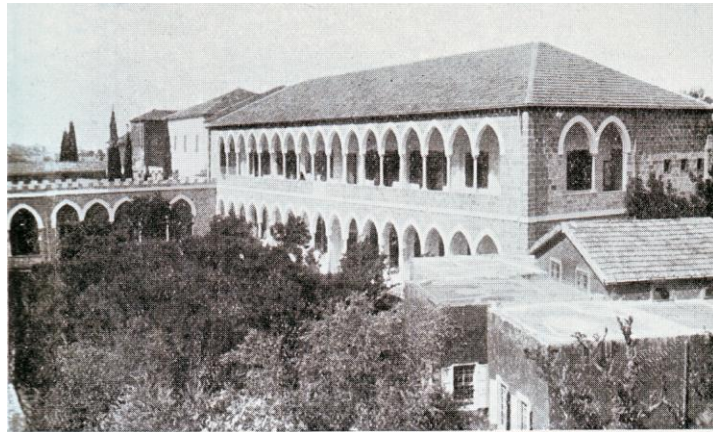
The secret of her influence was undoubtedly her intimate knowledge of the deeper truths of Christianity. "We want not only a Christ dying on the Cross that we may have Eternal Life," she wrote, "but a Risen Christ that we may walk in newness of life, made free from the power of sin as we were before from its guilt and punishment. I go on day by day claiming Christ as my soul's life, and every day He shows me more of Himself. We must be kept in communion with the Lord if there is to be any success." "Success" from her point of view meant chiefly the winning of souls for Christ, for it was her consuming desire for her pupils that she might see "Christ formed in them." How it must have rejoiced her heart, then, to get letters from her "children" telling of their little efforts for Christ, and to be able to record that the girls who gave their hearts to Jesus last year are growing much in Grace."

Miss Thompson was appointed Directress on the resignation of Miss James in 1895, while continuing as Principal of the Training Institution. The title was afterwards altered to that of "General Superintendent," but in 1906 she resigned the Principalship, finding the burden of both posts too much for her. The pressure of work indeed was great, for, to save expense, the labours of accountant and treasurer were voluntarily added. Yet wisdom and daily strength were given, and in one of her letters she tells the secret. "Prayer," she wrote, "is my one refuge, Jesus my only helper. He has been so precious that I do not seem to need another, and I am almost afraid to turn to an earthly counsellor less that should lessen the joy of His presence."

Progress of the Work.

The Mission continued to flourish, and in 1900 afresh centre was established at Shimlan, the school there being taken over from the Society for Promoting Family Education in the East. In the years 1901 and 1902 there were more schools than ever before or since, namely, 56, containing (in 1901) 4,262 pupils. Of the schools thirty-five, and of the pupils forty-nine, were specially supported. The increase in the number of schools, which at the beginning of 1897 which beginning only twenty-eight, was partly accounted for by the fact that in that year we were able to take over eighteen schools from the American Mission at a time when their work had to be curtailed. In 1902 and 1903,

however, owing to lack of funds some of these schools had to be returned and others were closed, but even so the B.S.M. was left with forty-four schools, although this number gradually decreased. That the schools were doing effective work was apparent from the outburst of a Moslem Judge in Beyrout, who, when inveighing against the custom of many of his co-religionists of sending their children to Christian schools, stated that he had never yet known a girl come out "uncontaminated," and that although, thanks to the bonds with which they were bound, they were unable to declare themselves Christians openly, they passed on the contagion by teaching their children! While referring to the schools it may be mentioned that in 1906 the old Training Institution, which was now under the charge of Miss Warburton, became the British Syrian Training College, a name by which it is still known to-day. In 1908 a new wing, called the "Dorothea Beale Memorial Wing," was added. This was a gift from old Cheltenham girls and other friends in memory of Miss Beale, who died in 1906 after being Principal of Cheltenham Ladies' College for forty-eight years.



British Syrian Training College

But although progress was being made the situation was such that Miss Thompson was compelled in 1901 to write "Work in Syria becomes every year more difficult." The fact was that the Eastern churches, the Moslems and the Druzes had taken alarm at seeing such numbers of their children in Protestant schools, and were rousing themselves to open schools on their own account. Moslem schools began to spring up in all directions, and the leading Moslem paper stated that Syria was deeply indebted to missionaries on account of the schools they had opened, but more on account of those they had indirectly caused to be opened! So trying was the situation in many ways that on January 10th, 1903, a special day of prayer was arranged at home, continuous intercession being kept up for more than twelve hours, different friends promising fifteen minutes each.

Muallim Selim Kessab.

In a short sketch of this kind it is impossible to mention by name more than a very few of those who throughout these seventy years have faithfully laboured in Syria. But more than a passing reference must be made to Muallim Selim Kessab, who, as already mentioned, was associated with Mrs. Bowen Thompson from the very beginning of the work, and for forty-six years was unsparing in his service for the Master Born at Damascus in 1841 Selim was in his youth a member of the Orthodox Greek Church, of which his grandfather was a priest and a noted preacher. He attended the Russian High School, the Principal of which, being a Greek and Hebrew scholar, was revising the proof sheets of the Arabic translation of the Bible which was being made by the Rev. Eli Smith and Dr. Van Dyck. He gave his pupils regular Bible lessons, and young Selim began to read the Scriptures for himself, with the result that he was led of the Holy Spirit to give himself entirely to Christ. He left the Greek

Church and worshipped with the American missionaries in their homes, for which he had of course to endure persecution.

Coming unscathed through the massacre of 1860, and accompanying the missionaries to Beyrout until matters in Damascus were more settled, Selim was encouraged by Mrs. Bowen Thompson, who had landed a fortnight previously, to teach her Arabic and to help her in her work. His very first task was to translate into Arabic the letter from the English ladies which is given in full on pages 20 to 21.** His close association with Mrs. Thompson had a great influence on him and determined his future career. "If a lady who is a volunteer and a foreigner," he thought, "does so much, and cares so



Muallim Selim Kessab

“A good man and full of Faith” (Acts 11. 24)

much, for my country, how much more ought I to spend and be spent in a cause so holy." He became in fact Mrs. Thompson's right-hand man. As teacher, interpreter, evangelist and counsellor he threw himself into the work, and was only second to Mrs. Thompson herself in his desire for the furtherance of her mission and for the spiritual welfare of his fellow countrymen. In the case of his native city Damascus, indeed, he became the first link in the chain which led to Mrs. Thompson starting work in that city. During a visit in 1867 he became very distressed regarding its condition, and, having laid the matter before the Throne of Grace, he was rejoiced to receive a card the very next morning from some leading Greek Orthodox gentlemen begging him to mediate with Mrs. Thompson on their behalf with a view to a girls' school being opened. He advised an influential petition, and this was duly prepared and signed, not only by Christians but by Jews and Moslems as well. This he at once translated and posted to Mrs. Thompson, and the result was the opening of the first B.S.M. school in Damascus. So indispensable to the work did Mrs. Bowen Thompson consider him to be that, during her last illness before she left Syria, she sent for him, and asked him to promise that as long as he lived

he would remain loyal to her sister and to the Mission, even as he had been to her. This pledge he willingly gave and faithfully kept.

*** (Ed. Page 13 of this version)*

In 1871 Selim visited England to do deputation work, and in six months he was the means of raising £3,000. In 1876 he paid a second visit for the same purpose. As Superintendent, and afterwards Inspector, of the schools he constantly visited them, held examinations, and reported on them. His numerous reports are very illuminating, and testify not only to the good work being done, but to his own earnest desire that the children should be won for Christ. They speak constantly of the wonderful knowledge of Scripture shown by quite small children, and give evidence of the fact that they would pass on to others what they had learnt. "We find many of them acting as missionaries," he writes, "not in their homes only but among their neighbours and friends where no other missionary is to be found, or, if found, can with difficulty gain access. The Lord is blessing their simple testimony, and drawing souls through this quiet but powerful channel to Himself." He also witnesses to the anxiety of the Syrian teachers to win their pupils. "One of the teachers," he writes, after inspecting the school at Hasbeiya, "was at one time much discouraged at not seeing any spiritual fruit to her work, and prayed much that the Lord would teach her how to draw the children to Him." It then occurred to her to speak to each one about her personal Salvation individually, and she found many a longing heart ready to hear and receive the Word. She then gathered them together for united prayer, and several who felt the burden of their sins and a deep need of a Saviour opened their lips in prayer, and many trusted Christ for pardon and peace. They then told their teacher 'We promise through the Grace of God to give ourselves to Him and to serve Him.' Their lives are proving the reality of their desire, and their improved behaviour both at school and at home is most encouraging."

Muallim Selim Kessab survived Mrs. Bowen Thompson, Mrs. Mott and Miss James, and his earthly service ended two years before Miss Thompson's retirement, for he was taken Home suddenly on February 1st, 1907. He had come down to prayers at the Training Institution as usual, and after a hymn had been sung and Psalm I. repeated he read the concluding verses of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel. Then he began to pray - thanksgiving, confession, and then a petition he often used - "Lord, may we be always ready, for we know not when Thou wilt desire to call us" - and then while he was speaking he was called away into the presence of His Master. "He lived so manifestly a life controlled by the presence of God," Miss Thompson wrote, "that we feel nothing but joy for him that he was taken from us at his best, serving the Mission to which he had given a life-long devotion with his last breath."

Revolution in Turkey.

Reference must here be made to a political event which occurred towards the end of Miss Thompson's regime, and which appeared likely to have a far-reaching influence on Christian work in Syria.

Although missionaries have no concern with the politics of the country in which they are at work, yet their liberty of action is often determined by the character of the political regime, and so it was in the Turkish Empire. For years past the autocratic rule of the Sultan had meant the curtailment of the privileges of the Christian communities, and in 1893 the Greek Patriarch had caused all the Orthodox churches to be closed as a protest. Although in 1895 England, France and Russia had propounded a scheme of reforms which was unwillingly accepted by the Porte, its very acceptance was the signal for a series of massacres in almost every town of importance throughout Asia Minor. Changes of ministry

at Constantinople were powerless to bring about an improvement in the situation, but the young Turkish party, called "The Young Turks," began to prepare for the overthrow of the old regime. Establishing a central body known as "The Committee of Union and Progress," and enlisting the support of the greater part of the Turkish army, they proclaimed the constitution at Salonica in 1908, and threatened the Sultan that unless he obeyed the proclamation the army would march on Constantinople. On July 21st he yielded, and agreed to restore the constitution of 1876 and to order the election of a chamber of deputies.

Thanks to the Imperial Firman to which allusion has been made our work had been carried on undisturbed throughout these troublous times, but the grant of a constitution and the establishment of parliamentary government, with its promise of civil and religious liberty, could not fail to arouse great expectations for the future of the work. Liberty was the cry everywhere. Christians and Moslems rejoiced together. Hope reigned supreme. In Beyrout the opening of Parliament was celebrated, all sects and races uniting in the general rejoicings and in processions through the town. A band of Armenians riding through the gates of the Court House in the big public square let fly white doves stained with marks of crimson, a token of the "liberty" which should free them from the ever present fear of massacre at the hands of their Moslem fellow subjects. Students from the various schools and colleges marched through the streets singing songs of liberty.

But true liberty carries with it responsibilities, and for these the public were unprepared; for to many of them liberty meant freedom for each man to do what was right in his own eyes, with the inevitable result that robberies and murders became of daily occurrence. Disturbances broke out in various parts of the empire; a terrible massacre of Armenians by Moslems took place at Adana; and a counter revolution in Constantinople itself was temporarily successful. But for the recapture of that city by the Young Turks and the deposition of the Sultan, Abd-ul-Hamid, in favour of his younger brother, in April, 1909, Beyrout and Damascus would in all probability have suffered the fate of Adana. As it was there was a general sense of insecurity, and that this was not without justification was evidenced not only by internal but by external happenings; for from 1911 to 1922 Turkey was almost continuously at war. As for the hoped for religious liberty, it must be remembered that although the revolution had reduced the Sultan to virtual political impotence he was still recognised as Caliph of Islam by the greater part of the Moslem world; and Islam and progress are incompatible, for equality between Moslems and "unbelievers" is unthinkable to the devout followers of Mohammed.

Work at Home.

There is little of importance to record about the work done at home during the period 1896 to 1909. Annual meetings were regularly held, and recourse was had to exhibitions, with a view to interesting people in Syria and thus raising the necessary funds for the work in the field. The chief event was probably the appointment of Bishop Handley Moule of Durham as Patron, in succession to the Bishop of Gibraltar, in 1901, and as President, in succession to the Bishop of Exeter, in 1906. In the same year the British Syrian Mission hymn, "*O Land of Sacred Story*," was written by Mrs Janvrin for an exhibition at Redhill.

Resignation and death of Miss Thompson.

The strenuous work of the past years had told on Miss Thompson's health, and in 1907 she went home on furlough. She did not however definitely resign until 1909, and then she returned to Syria and spent five happy years in retirement, living with her friend Miss Talbot. She was not idle,

however, and much of her time was devoted to the Blind Schools, where she introduced and taught Braille. Links were strengthened with old pupils, and there were many opportunities of quiet heart-to-heart talks. Her closing years were spent with the same friend in Devonshire, but Syria was to the end her constant interest. Her memory never failed, and in her letters to Syria she would ask for one after the other by name and send special greetings. She went Home peacefully at Westward Ho! on September 20th, 1922.

CHAPTER VII.

1910-1914, Pre-war Days.

Miss Johnston.

While Miss Thompson had been in England from 1907 to 1909, Miss M. L. Johnston, who had joined the Mission in 1805, had been acting for her, and when Miss Thompson resigned Miss Johnston was appointed in her place. At Miss Johnston's request, however, the post was no longer that of "Directress" but "General Secretary of the Mission in Syria."

Progress of the Work.

In every part of the field the work as usual went steadily forward in spite of various difficulties. Not the least of these was the war between Italy and Turkey, which broke out in September, 1911, and lasted just over a year, to be followed almost immediately by the Balkan war. Although not comparable to the terrible tragedy which was to overwhelm the country a few years later, the Italian war, especially, caused considerable distress among the people; trade was at a standstill, poverty among the poorer classes was great, and rumours were rife. In February, 1912, two Italian warships bombarded the Turkish gun boats in Beyrout harbour, and the excitement in the town rose to fever heat. The Moslem mob broke open the Government Arsenal and seized the arms, a massacre of Christians began, and serious trouble was only averted by the promptitude of the Governor of the city, who proclaimed martial law. It is not surprising that anxious parents came down from the Lebanon prepared to take their children home, and it was a tribute to our workers that eventually all except one little Moslem girl decided to remain, and the parents returned home happily, throwing all the responsibility on the Mission, and confident that with the British their children were as "in an iron box."

In thousands of homes there was real distress owing to the calling out of the Reserve Forces, which meant that married men had to leave their families wholly unprovided for, in many cases never to return. In homes such as these our Bible women were welcome visitors and the gratitude for any little help received was pathetic. But "in spite of poverty and unrest," wrote Miss Johnston in 1913, "our schools have been full and the work has been unhindered; indeed fresh opportunity has often come to us just because of the sorrow and distress on every hand." In Damascus, indeed, the Moslem or "Francis Paynter" School (so-called in memory of the Rev. Francis Paynter, who, since visiting Syria with Mrs. Paynter some years previously, had been deeply interested in the work) was so well attended that larger quarters had to be sought.

The difficulty of competing schools, to which reference was made in the last chapter, was making itself increasingly felt. In the villages round Hasbeiya, for instance, there was not the same readiness on the part of the people as formerly to supply rooms or pay fees, this being due usually to the fact that denominational schools had been opened by the Greek Church. Indeed there can be no doubt that during the past years not only the Oriental Churches but the Moslems and Druzes themselves had taken a leaf out of our book. Having seen the excellent results of our little schools, results which were of course due far less to the secular instruction than to the Bible teaching and the influence of Christian teachers, they had started schools themselves, in many cases charging no fees, and had thus, in some districts at any rate, limited the demand for Mission Schools.

But still the work went on, and a happy event during this period was the celebration in the year 1910 of the Jubilee of the Mission. At home special meetings were held and special numbers of the magazine issued; a Jubilee Fund was started, and a Jubilee League for young people formed. The Syrians themselves were not behindhand in realising the significance of the occasion, and a sum of £70, subscribed by a number of them as a "Jubilee Thankoffering," was forwarded to the Committee with a letter expressive of their gratitude for the work done by the B.S.M. Of the eight signatories to this letter six had personally known Mrs. Bowen Thompson in the early days of the Mission. But the most enduring monument in the field was a new wing built on to the Training College. This handsome building, called the "Jubilee Building," was a generous gift to the Mission and was opened in 1911. It contained a beautiful Prayer Hall, Class Rooms and Dormitories, which met a crying need, and old pupils, friends of many years standing, missionaries from Tripoli, Sidon and Palestine, as well as a goodly band of B.S.M. workers, united in consecrating this addition to the old Training Institution for future service. Two old pupils were talking of the days when they were at school together, and turning to Miss Johnston with earnest faces, "No one can estimate," they said, "the blessing that has gone out to Syria from that home," and they spoke of one and another now serving the Master in different fields who had learnt to know Him there. "The years have brought changes," wrote Miss Stowell, who had herself been in the field for twenty-one years; "there has been growth, development and expansion, increased numbers, larger premises, a fuller staff of workers, an expanded curriculum, but all on the old lines with the same absolute aim - to draw by God's grace every one of these girls into the light, joy and service of Jesus Christ, and to send them forth to be light bearers and servers of others."

Gideon Aoud.

But it is not girls only who through the Mission have been "drawn into the service of Jesus Christ"; men and boys have learnt to love and serve Him too, and among them Gideon Aoud. Gideon was in some respects a remarkable man, and as he was last heard of in 1913 his history may be briefly told here.

It was about the year 1884 that a young Bedouin shepherd was watching his sheep high up in the Lebanon mountains. Suddenly his eye fell on a scrap of paper half hidden among the stones, and picking it up he saw that it was covered with mysterious marks which he was unable to decipher. Running down to the side of the road which winds through the mountains from Beyrout to Damascus he asked the passers-by to tell him what the marks meant. The fragment happened to be a piece torn out of some primer, and therefore particularly appropriate to a beginner, and the words thus learnt on the mountain side were the first links in the chain which brought the shepherd into touch with the B.S.M.



Gideon Aoud

“Ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ” (Acts 5. 42)

Gideon Aoud, for such was the shepherd's name, strayed into Beyrout, and there he met one of our Syrian teachers. His thirst for knowledge led him to enter the Beyrout night school in 1884 and he also became a pupil in the Boys' School, where he stayed for five years. One of the teachers in the latter school was M. Selig Kessab, and in the night school he came under the special influence of M. Ibrahim Attiyeh, who was the means of leading him to Christ, and who, after M. Selim Kessab's death in 1907 became the Mission Inspector. Young Gideon, Moslem though he was, eagerly studied the Scriptures and drank in the Gospel truths. He belonged to the Anazeh tribe of the Bedouins, a very numerous, daring and influential but ignorant tribe, and he fired with the desire to take the Gospel to them. And if anyone needs the Gospel the Bedouins do. Claiming Ishmael as their ancestor they still wander from place to place in search of pasture for their flocks. Professing Mohammedanism, they pay but slight attention to the ceremonial precepts of the Koran, and their one excitement is a robbing expedition, which is often carried out with extraordinary skill and rapidity. Sometimes there is bitter strife between two tribes, but except when a blood feud exists they seldom kill for the sake of killing, though they do not scruple to do so if resisted. They possess some degree of truthfulness, and show a certain respect for women, and their unswerving obedience to the laws of hospitality is proverbial. Ignorant of writing and unacquainted with books the Bedouins trust to their memory for everything. While he was still at school Gideon would go off into the villages and testify to the truth of the Gospel, and eventually he was baptised. He became a faithful and earnest worker among his own tribe, the only Bedouin in the world who was himself a missionary. To this work he was sent forth with the prayer, the counsel and the blessing of Bishop French, who was at that time in Syria. The reports about him were most encouraging. "For one year I have been with the Bedouins," he writes, "teaching sonic of the children, and reading the Word of God, and doing what I could to teach them about Jesus as I was taught in the British Syrian Schools." There could indeed be no doubt about the simplicity of his aim.

As he travelled from place to place the fact that he, a Bedouin, was able to read caused continual amazement to his fellow tribesmen, and at once gave him an opening to speak to them. He was nicknamed "The Reading Sheikh," and became well known in the tribe. Although appointed Scripture reader to the Bedouins he was given a roving commission, and he travelled as far afield as the Euphrates. But while he was continually made welcome he had his enemies, and at times his every

movement was watched. He was beaten and robbed, and fears were often entertained that he had been put to death. On one occasion, indeed, being accused "of deceiving the Bedouins" and studying "the Book of the Infidels" he was judged "worthy to be killed," but, nothing daunted, he boldly challenged his accuser to judge for himself, and opening his Bible he seized the opportunity of again telling his message. The heart of the Bedouin was softened, and he went away declaring emphatically that "the words were good" and that all who should speak against them were "liars."

From time to time Gideon used to make his appearance at headquarters, or at one of the outlying stations, and give a report of the work that he had done, and a number of these reports, written in the quaint English he had picked up while at school in Beyrout, are to be found in the pages of the magazine. Here are three of them chosen at random out of many.

"I read to them from Ephesians vi. I explained to them what the Apostle of our Lord Jesus said about the honour of children to parents, and about the parents themselves. They were much surprised, and said 'Finish it, finish it, how sweet it is! it is sweeter than milk and honey, and also sweeter than the dates; we wish we could buy reading with camels and horses.' I said, 'Bring your children that I may teach them, they will become better than I!' They said, 'We are beasts, we understand nothing.' Then one of them said 'Take my two children and let them learn.'"

"It one meeting I spoke with them about prayer; it must be by faith through Jesus, and that God will hear the prayer in the Name of His Son. Then one began to say 'I must pray then that He may give me some mules' - then another said 'I shall ask Him to give me some mares'; others said 'We shall ask for sheep and cows'; then an old Bedouin asked me 'What do you like to pray for?' I read to them from Matthew vi. 33-34, also I read to them from 1 Kings iii. How Solomon did not seek riches but asked for wisdom. Then I read to them that text 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.'"

"There was a Bedouin who wished much to hear the Gospel. I made him understand that our Lord Jesus the Christ has saved us from our sin. 'How did He save us?' he asked. I explained to him how we being sinners He found no other means for our salvation than His Own body and blood. He suffered the punishment we deserve and died to save the world, therefore we must believe in Him and thank Him for His great kindness to us. 'My son,' said the Bedouin, 'asked me to offer a camel in sacrifice for him.' 'If you put your trust in Jesus Christ,' I said, 'You need no more sacrifices, as He sacrificed Himself for us.' Then the Bedouin when he heard this said 'I will renounce the sacrifice of my camel, and will put my trust in Jesus Christ the Son of God. I believe in Him. You, who know more than I do, have read to me and made me to understand the words of Allah, therefore I have believed.'"

The last time Gideon put in an appearance was in 1913, when the Mission Workers' Conference was gathered at Shimlan. Nothing was heard of him during the war years, and, although it was confidently expected that he would turn up once more when peace was restored, yet he never came. Can it be that he had laid down his life, a martyr for the faith? Did he like so many others perish in the war? It is probable that we shall never know; but his work remains, and there must be many Bedouins to-day who, as they pitch their tents now here, now there, remember Gideon, and thank God for the day when first he crossed their path.

A Retrospect.

The passing out of sight of Gideon was only symptomatic of many another change which the years of

war were to bring, and as we stand upon its threshold it will be well to cast a backward glance over the years which lie behind. Fifty-four years of patient steady work had passed since the founding of the Mission; the original centre in Beyrout with its one hired house had grown into eight centres Beyrout, Hasbeiya, Zahleh, Damascus, Ainzahalta, Tyre, Baalbec and Shimlan, where eleven substantial buildings, the property of the Mission, testified to the wisdom and generosity of those who had planned them. Two generations of girls had grown up to womanhood under the influence which these centres represented, a quarter of a million children had been taught year by year in the various schools, forty thousand children had had an of six years under Christian influence at the most impressionable time of their lives, and over five hundred girl teachers had left our Training centre to pass on to others what they themselves had learned. In the year ending June 30th, 1914, the last complete year before the war, there were thirty-six schools in existence with an attendance of 3,101 pupils; thirty-two Sunday Schools were being carried on with an average attendance of 1,826; dispensary work was in progress in Tyre, Baalbec and Ainzahalta; and twelve Bible women and Scripture readers were employed. The Training College had in fact experienced a record year as regards numbers, the pupils totalling 250, of whom 115 were boarders and 42, members of the training classes.

Statistics are always suggestive, but they do not tell the whole or indeed half the story. "We aim at a development of mind, body and spirit," wrote Miss Johnston, "which shall prepare the way of the Lord in the case of every child, and pray that by His power He Whose right it is to reign in every heart may enter in and take possession." That this aim was being realised there could be no doubt. homes purified and blessed, raised standards of conduct, hearts ready to receive the Gospel, all testified to the fact that Ills way was being prepared. That in the case of many still living He had entered in and taken possession there was undoubted evidence, while numbers during those years had entered that Heavenly Home of which they had first heard in their school days. Judged by such standards as these, those who, in the cause of Christ, had given the best years of their life to Syria had not laboured in vain.

CHAPTER VIII.

1914-1918, War.

Outbreak of War.

At the beginning of 1914 everything as far as the Mission was concerned appeared to be proceeding smoothly. Even the financial sky was unusually clear, for not only was there a clean balance sheet but accumulated deficits had been wiped out. And then suddenly the storm broke which was to darken the sky of Syria for many a long day.

Those interested in the affairs of the Near East had noted with much misgiving the growing influence of Germany in the Ottoman Empire. Beginning during the reign of Abd-ul-Hamid it had become stronger with the advent to power of the Committee of Union and Progress, and it reached its highest point shortly before the outbreak of war between Germany and the Allies, when the policy of the Turkish Government became not only pro-German but anti-English. It was not surprising, then, that the outbreak of war in Europe in the summer of 1914 was followed in the autumn by the intervention of Turkey.

Withdrawal of Missionaries.

But even before the entry of Turkey into the war the situation in Syria was one of extreme tension and acute distress. The first definite sign of trouble came with Turkey's notice to revoke the "Capitulations" or privileges accorded to foreigners resident in the Turkish Empire. The foreign post offices were closed; the Turkish Army was mobilised; banks refused to pay out cash deposited with them or to accept cheques drawn on other countries; and trade came to a standstill. In view of these conditions the Committee communicated with the Foreign Office asking for an assurance that steps were being taken for the adequate protection of British subjects and interests in the Ottoman Empire, but a reply was received from Sir Edward Grey stating that the situation was so precarious that our missionaries should be withdrawn. Even their withdrawal was not accomplished without difficulty, for few steamers were running, and these under peculiar conditions; it was ultimately found necessary to send a special Agent from Egypt carrying sufficient gold coin before passages could be arranged. The withdrawal was completed by the end of September, 1914, about a month before the entry of Turkey into the war.

Conditions in Syria.

Although Syria was the base of the Turkish Fourth Army, and therefore remained throughout the war under the shadow of a powerful Turkish force, yet, except for an occasional raid on the coast, the country did not become an actual theatre of war until shortly before the Armistice. But this does not mean that it did not suffer; on the contrary the country suffered at the hands of its own Government a worse fate than would have been meted out to it by the enemy. A policy of deliberate starvation was adopted, Syrian notables were deported and their property confiscated, and countless political executions were carried out. Typhus and cholera were rife, and a severe famine was accentuated by a terrible plague of locusts. The number of deaths was consequently appalling. In 1916 an American missionary vouched for the fact that in a few months eighty thousand Syrians had died of starvation, and many thousands of typhus. Another eye witness counted over eighty persons lying in one of the main streets of Damascus dying of hunger. Armenian girls and women were sold in the streets of Beyrout for sums varying from one to five shillings. "People could not sleep," wrote Miss Johnston

after her return, "for the wailing and moaning of the starving people dying at their doors; many never went out rather than see the dead bodies lying in the streets; beggars came round asking, not for bread, but for the dustbins to search out the garbage and eat it; dead donkeys were torn to pieces where they fell and eaten raw - carts went round with men loading up the dead and burying them in a common trench, and many lay for two, three, and four days unburied on the public road; women had to scrape shallow holes and carry out their dead to burial. Whole classes of people died."

Under such conditions it may readily be imagined that our buildings did not escape damage; they were all confiscated by the Turkish authorities and used for barracks or other purposes, the furniture was looted, and in many cases grave damage was done to the structures themselves. In Damascus, for instance, the Chapel of St. Paul's School was used as a stable by the Turkish troops, and at the end of the war was found to be roofless. Fortunately the Training College was never occupied by soldiers, but was used as a Mohammedan school. The Koran took the place of the Bible, and where, for nearly sixty years, teachers and pupils had knelt in the Name of Christ Mohammed was exalted. The motto of the Mission - "Jehovah-jireh " - which was carved in stone over the entrance door was obliterated, and the dedicatory tablet on the Jubilee Building was broken and trampled under foot. But a day of reckoning was coming for the Turk!

Carrying on.

The withdrawal of the European missionaries was a severe testing time for the Syrian workers left alone to face the conditions outlined above. And nobly they stood the test. As long as possible a number of the village schools were kept open, and the Bible women, so far as they were able, went about their work. In Damascus, for instance, a great deal of Bible work was done in the homes and harems of the city all through the years of war, and the terrible ordeal through which the people were going aroused a spirit of enquiry among them. "Our Syrian workers have done nobly," wrote Miss Johnston after the war; "they have helped the people and kept cheerful under all the dreadful suffering."

The British Government granted a special license for the sending through a neutral nation of money for the support of the Syrian workers, and an occasional message reached England stating that the remittances had been received. But, even so, many suffered severe deprivations, and a fuller insight was gained into the power of prayer than ever before. One of our Bible women, for instance, was in great distress, for she had a large family and there was no food in the house and no money to buy any. She went into an inner room, weeping and praying. Suddenly she heard a knock at the door, and a Jewish lady came in bringing eight dollars from an absent daughter, and an invitation for the two younger children to go and live with her during the stress. That unexpected evening visitor was just like one of Elijah's ravens to her, and will never be forgotten. "It was all one long miracle," said a young teacher, left orphaned early in the war, as she thought of God's protecting during those awful years.

And what of the girls brought up in our schools? They were splendid, and set an example to their fellow countrymen which the latter were not slow to appreciate. It was repeatedly said of one and another, "She was the man of the house," or, in other words, the mainstay of the family. By teaching, knitting, spinning, typewriting and in many other ways they proved self-reliant and helped to keep the wolf from the door. One young girl in a mountain village, for instance, was reduced to great want, but won the respect of the whole neighbourhood by the way she worked, rising before dawn and carrying

corn to the mill, baking bread and selling it in the market. She was bare-foot and reduced to rags, but remained, in their phrase, "an honourable lady." Indeed, many mothers, with tears in their eyes, thanked our missionaries on their return for the training their girls had received, for this they knew had been their safeguard in the midst of terrible surroundings. To many these years, so full of trial and anguish, were years of soul growth and of deepening spiritual experience.

Miss Kendall.

But it was not only our Syrian workers and our old girls who "carried on" during the war. The prayers and thoughts of friends of the Mission at home constantly centred round Ainzahalta, our headquarters in the Lebanon, where Miss Kendall, with her two companions the Misses Oliver, was bravely holding the fort. Even before the war there had been threats of massacre, and Miss Kendall had often promised that she would not leave the people in the hour of danger. When the order for our missionaries to withdraw was issued the Misses Oliver were in so poor a state of health that they could not undertake the journey, and this opened the way for Miss Kendall to remain. Miss Elise Oliver died during the war, and Miss Christian Oliver immediately after. They are both buried at Ainzahalta.

An infrequent postcard through a neutral channel was the only news received throughout those four long years, for the fog of war had closed down upon the Lebanon mountains, and the full story had to await the great Deliverance. And what a story it was - of "perils of robbers," of "weariness and painfulness," of "watchings often," of "fastings often," but, above all, of God's protecting power day by day, - a story of faith tested and faith triumphant!

It has already been related how in the year 1860 the Druzes had cruelly massacred numbers of Christians, and it looked in 1914 as if the tragedy might be repeated. Armed by the Turks, the Druzes were again and again ordered to massacre all the Christians in Syria, but they not only refused to do so, but, on the contrary, in many cases aided them, a testimony, surely, to the efficacy of the Gospel teaching in our schools throughout the intervening years! The Turks then condemned both Christians and Druzes to starvation, and cut off communications with the Hauran, the ancient land of Bashan, whence a great deal of the corn usually came. In the Kesarawan district whole villages died out, and houses full of dead people were found. With the help of money supplied through the American Mission in Beyrout, however, Miss Kendall, with her faithful and willing helpers, was able to supply with bread over fourteen villages round Ainzahalta. A "loaf," or rather a little flat cake of bread weighing three ounces, was given daily to mothers and children under thirteen, while those who were not to have any, because the supply was insufficient, would throw themselves on the ground begging, weeping and imploring to be given one little taste of bread. Prayer was always offered for special blessing on the little loaf, made as it was in later days from the flour of acorns collected by Miss Kendall herself, and many were the testimonies to its miraculous sustaining power. Thistles, mulberry leaves, maidenhair fern and arum lilies were all used to satisfy the pangs of hunger, but unless those days had been shortened few would have survived. Indeed in some cases parents dashed their children on the rocks or drowned them, being unable to bear the sight of their sufferings and their continual cry for food.

The chance, too, of "battle, murder, and sudden death was always present. Although Miss Kendall's fear that they might have to "flee and hide in the rocks and higher mountains from hordes of infuriated Turks" was mercifully never realised, yet they were in constant danger from bands of starving deserters from the Turkish Army, who infested the mountains and robbed and murdered all

they saw, "One day, returning from one of my peregrinations with our precious Arab pony," wrote Miss Kendall, "I had to traverse a dangerous valley. Half way there was a rocky eminence, used as a watch-tower by the enemy. I looked up and saw a red fez, then a gun. I saw the man rise and run along the mountain track, hurrying to get down to the road farther on. Rapid riding alone could save me. Could I ask that little weary horse, weakened with poor food, to gallop as in past and better days? With a cry for help from above, I gave it the old sign for a gallop. Off it went with all its former vigour, as if rejoicing in new-found strength. It was a race between us and that man! Could we pass the gully before he got down? As we passed its mouth I looked up. There was the enemy half-way down. He raised his gun - too late - we had passed. It was long before I drew rein! "

It was a time of great sadness. No muleteer sang his song; there was no whistling; even the children's voices were seldom heard. News from the outside world was cut off, and when Jerusalem was taken by the British in 1917 no whisper of it reached the Lebanon. Hope seemed almost dead. "Yet all the time," writes Miss Kendall, "we felt safe and happy, knowing that 'underneath are the Everlasting Arms,' always strengthened, always fed by some means, always protected and kept from the arrow that flieth by day and the pestilence that walketh by night, always trusting, always safe."

Missionary Exiles.

When our other missionaries were withdrawn from Syria under instructions from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs some of them went home on furlough, while others stayed in Egypt so as to be near at hand when the way opened, as they expected it shortly would, for them to return to Syria. As soon as it was realised that the war was not to be merely an affair of weeks, they all took up various branches of work. Some did deputation work at home and were warmly welcomed, especially by those who were eagerly watching events in the Near East. Some gave assistance in government offices at home, or worked with the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A. or V.A.D., while others found opportunities in France and Egypt of witnessing for God among the soldiers in homes and hospitals. Our younger members pursued the study of Arabic in Cairo, and, while in Egypt, Miss Johnston and Miss Warburton were able to visit and gather for meetings and Bible study many former pupils of the B.S.M. whose homes were in that country, numbers of them being teachers in the schools of the various Missions, and others married women with children of their own. In order to cope with the terrible distress reported to be prevalent in Syria and Palestine a fund called "The Syria and Palestine Relief Fund," embracing all British Missionary Societies working in Syria and Palestine, was started while the war was still in progress. Our missionaries gave valuable assistance both in the administration of this fund and in making known at home the necessity of such relief measures as it was proposed to take. Indeed, two B.S.M. missionaries - Miss Warburton and Miss Fisher - were the first British women who, early in 1918, were allowed into Palestine for relief work. The Committee sanctioned for a time the division of the proceeds of all meetings between the Relief Fund and the B.S.M. Restoration Fund, the latter being a fund which was raised with the object of insuring the speedy restoration of our own work as soon as peace was declared.

In these and other ways our missionaries were hard at work, but they one and all "wished for the day" - the day when the way would open up for them to return to Syria, and to minister to those whose sufferings were continually on their hearts.

Deliverance.

And the day came - almost suddenly at the last. In the autumn of 1918 General Allenby, having

expelled the Turks from Palestine, swept on after them through Syria. Damascus was seized on October 1st, when a British detachment and part of the Arab army marched through the streets. Beyrout was occupied on October 7th, and on October 31st the British cavalry were fifteen miles north of Aleppo. The Armistice which then came into force left the whole of Syria in the hands of the Allies.

General Allenby knew that Miss Kendall and Miss Oliver were alone in the Lebanon, and in the midst of his wonderful campaign he found time to think of and to write to them. One day when Miss Kendall was returning from her work in the valley below Ainzahalta she was overjoyed to meet General Bulfin who, by General Allenby's instructions, had come to see after her welfare; and soon after Beyrout had been taken a cable was received in London through the War Office telling of her safety and that of Miss Oliver. The joy and relief of the people in the Lebanon, Beyrout, Damascus and elsewhere knew no bounds. "The very news," wrote Miss Kendall "seemed to make thin people fat! A restful look came into their haggard faces, the children began to play and shout."

It may be imagined how eager our missionaries were to return. Miss Warburton, formerly Principal of the British Syrian Training College, had already opened a British High School for girls at Jerusalem. After that city had fallen into the hands of the British the Government encouraged the establishment of Moslem and Jewish schools. Miss Warburton, who was on the spot, felt that if a Christian school, where Bible teaching could be given to all, was to be opened, a move must be made at once. She obtained permission, and "Talitha Cumi," as the school was called, became an instant success. In December, 1918, she and Miss Johnston arrived in Beyrout from Haifa in a "Drifter" belonging to the navy in order to take possession of our buildings, and Miss Warburton took back with her to Jerusalem some of our old Training College girls in order that they might complete their training at Talitha Cumi.

Although others of our workers were able to return to Syria in the early days of 1919, it was not until the autumn that circumstances were sufficiently normal for the work of the Mission to be resumed. The stories of the happenings during the past five years were pitiful in the extreme.

Whole families had been wiped out; many who survived had lost all their possessions; there were thousands of orphans in the streets; many a house was in ruins; and our own buildings were in many cases terribly damaged. The people had almost given up hope, and one and another had said "We never thought we would live to see you again." Is it surprising that our missionaries received a rapturous welcome! People literally fell on their necks in the streets, and the gatherings of Syrian teachers, Bible women, and old girls, so lately liberated from the fear of a terrible death, were occasions of heartfelt rejoicing. Indeed it is impossible to read the story of those times without thinking of that still gladder day when "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces" - when "The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

CHAPTER IX.

Stray Threads.

Management of the Mission.

Those who are not already interested in the Mission will find little to entertain them in this chapter, but it has been thought well to interrupt the story at this point for the purpose of dwelling on certain matters on which friends of the Mission may like to have information.

The schools were originally administered by Mrs. Bowen Thompson with the assistance of a Committee of ladies in London, while a local Committee of men in Beyrout was formed to act as Trustees and to give Mrs. Bowen Thompson any help she needed. There was also a Finance Committee at home consisting of three men.

In 1876 Mrs. Henry Smith and Mrs. Mentor Mott, to whom the management of the schools had been bequeathed, resigned owing to the interference of the Ladies' Committee at home in various matters. They withdrew their resignations, however, and a new arrangement was entered into by which they assumed the entire direction of the Mission, but agreed to send reports and statements of accounts, duly audited by a consultative Committee in Beyrout, to a Home Council. Such a Council, consisting of men only, was formed at a meeting held in 1877, with the Bishop of Sydney in the chair, while in 1879 a Ladies' Council also appeared, both these Councils being advisory only.

After the death of Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Mott, and in accordance with a Trust Deed executed by them, a General Meeting was held in London on October 28th, 1891, at which a mixed Committee of ladies and gentlemen was elected to make such rules and regulations as it should deem advisable for the efficient carrying on of the work. It is this Committee which has ever since had administrative control.

At the time when this change of control was effected the Honorary Secretary of the Mission was Mrs. Auriol- Barker, sister-in-law of the Bishop of Sydney, its former President, whom she had visited in Australia and with whom she subsequently travelled in Syria. She had been a member of the Ladies' Council appointed in 1879, and was for seventeen years Honorary Secretary of the Mission until she died in 1898. Her name is mentioned here as one who formed in her own person a link between home, Syria and Overseas, as one, too, who worthily held a post of responsibility at a critical time in the history of the Mission, and who was universally beloved.

Magazine.

From the commencement of the Mission voluminous Annual Reports were published and occasional letters or leaflets were also issued, but there was no magazine. The want of such a paper gradually made itself felt, and in 1882 a quarterly publication, entitled "British Syrian Schools and Bible Mission," appeared, while, in 1884, the report for the previous year was embodied with this quarterly paper for the sake of economy. In 1889 its name was changed to "Daughters of Syria," but illustrations did not appear in it until October, 1899. In 1910 an attractive picture cover was adopted, but this was abandoned in 1916 as a war-time economy, when the present style of cover came into use. Except that its shape is somewhat different no substantial change has been made in the appearance of the magazine since that date.

Financial Policy.

Enquiries are sometimes made as to how we raise the funds for the work, and whether we are what is termed a "Faith Mission." Faith that God will supply the means for carrying on what is His Own work is the basis of all our activities. There is a prayer meeting in the Office every morning, as well as a special prayer meeting every month. Each meeting of the Committee is opened and closed with prayer. Members of the Prayer Fellowship at home and Overseas are kept informed regarding, among other matters, the state of the funds. Thus both collectively and individually the needs are laid before the Lord in faith that He will meet them as He sees fit. But we see nothing inconsistent with "faith" in letting the Lord's people know of the needs, whether general or special, and are willing to accept offerings at meetings as well as the proceeds of efforts, such as simple Sales of Work, which are recognised means of raising money for missionary work. The Committee would not, however, sanction the holding of purely secular entertainments on behalf of the Mission, nor the employment of worldly means of raising money. Of recent years "Thanks Boxes" have been much used. These are little cardboard boxes intended primarily for thank-offerings for answers to prayer or for blessings received. They have been the means of blessing, not only to the Mission, but also to those who habitually use them.

We desire that anything which shall be given to the work shall be given Lord, "willingly and as unto the "for God loveth a cheerful giver."

Founder's Day.

March 25th was Mrs. Bowen Thompson's birthday, and this day, or a convenient date near it, is celebrated in all our schools as "Founder's Day." Special addresses are given and the Gospel Message pressed home, with the result that it is often a day of decision for many of the girls. The day is also kept at home and Overseas, when special prayer is offered for blessing on the work.

A Women's Mission?

Enquiries are often made as to why it is that all our missionaries are women, and whether it would not be wise in future to recruit men as well. This is not the place to consider the pros and cons for a change of policy, but it may be well to state the facts of the case. It is clear that Mrs. Bowen Thompson's primary object was to care for the refugees, and that the Mission grew up without, at first, any very defined policy. It became, however, a Mission to "Syrian Females," and writing in 1867 Mrs. Thompson referred to it as a "Woman's Mission to the Women of Syria," but added that she continually needed the support, the encouragement and counsel, of the stronger sex, the context making it clear, however, that she referred to the support of men at home rather than on the field.

Although the Mission was to the women of Syria, yet it soon became evident that its influence was reaching men as well, and it may be noted that the constitution, revised from time to time, nowhere lays down that all the missionaries must be women. This was at any rate not so in the case of Syrian workers, and Muallim Selim Kessab was the Mission Inspector or Superintendent of Schools for many years, and did splendid work. Mr. Mentor Mott himself took a considerable share in the Mission, and in 1873 Mr. and Mrs. Mackintosh were appointed Superintendents of the work in Damascus, from which they finally resigned in 1882.

But Mrs. Mott contemplated a further step still. In the preface to the report for 1875 the Rev. Robert Poynder, the Clerical Secretary of the Mission at home, who had recently completed a tour of

inspection in Syria, urged that the one great desideratum was "a Clerical Secretary who should be resident at Beyrout, taking under his charge the religious training in our Institution, but part of whose duties would be to visit our schools periodically and to report to the Home Committee." Such a man was needed, he said, as "would work harmoniously with those ladies who have devoted themselves to this noble cause, and have hitherto taken its direction in their hands, but who themselves admit the importance of such an appointment." The Committee endorsed Mr. Poynder's suggestions, which they said were "most valuable and will be fully carried out." The same desire was voiced both by Mrs. Henry Smith and Mrs. Mott in 1876, the former of whom, while recognising their indebtedness to the American missionaries and also to the minister of the Scotch Church, considered that "our own extensive Mission claims the undivided care of a faithful man of God," while Mrs. Mott desired "earnestly to impress upon our friends in England to pray the Lord of the harvest to direct us to a man of God who feels the call to 'Come over and help us'."

Had this appointment been made there would at that time have been three men missionaries on the field in addition to Muallim Selim Kessab and other Syrian men workers. The project, however, for some reason or other, fell through, and to-day, except in the case of the Men's Blind School, there are no men workers, either European or Syrian, on our staff.

Theological Basis.

The Mission is Evangelical and Inter-denominational, and thus affords common ground for service by members of all Churches who value Christian unity. It takes its stand on the Bible as the Inspired Word of God, and Rule IV. of the "Rules and Regulations" of the Society provides that "The Society shall employ as missionaries only those who loyally adhere to Protestant and Evangelical Truth, and to the full Inspiration of Holy Scripture." The theological basis is dealt with in more detail in a leaflet called "Eternal Verities." This is too long to quote in full here, but the concluding paragraph, which summarizes the position, runs as follows "Our Mission stands, in a word, for the old-fashioned Gospel, the Gospel which tells of ruin and redemption, of sin and salvation; which speaks, too, of a transformed life lived in the power of the Resurrection, guided and controlled by the indwelling Spirit. An old-fashioned Gospel? Yes, indeed; but the only one which can cure an old-fashioned complaint; for nothing else can meet and satisfy the sinner's need today."

CHAPTER X.

The Mission Stations.

The actual stations of the Mission have only been mentioned incidentally, and it is well that a chapter should be devoted to them before the thread of the narrative is resumed, for their very names are such as awaken the memory and stir the interest of every Bible student - Damascus, the scene of the Apostle Paul's conversion, reputed to be the oldest city in the world - Tyre, whose coasts were hallowed by the footsteps of the Incarnate Son of God—Lebanon, whose glens resounded with the cries of Hiram's axemen - Hermon the scene, so tradition has it, of our Lord's Transfiguration - names, surely, which in themselves make an irresistible missionary appeal! The main stations are eight in number, and they are here briefly detailed in the order in which work was started in them.

Beyrout.

Situated at the foot of Mount Lebanon, and overlooking St. George's Bay, Beyrout is a city of some 100,000 inhabitants of varying races and religions, of whom probably about one-third are Moslems and the majority members of one or other of the Oriental Christian Churches. It was one of the most ancient settlements on the Phoenician coast, and may possibly be identified with Berothai or Berothah mentioned in 11 Samuel viii. 8 and Ezekiel xlvi. 16. It was the headquarters of the B.S.M. in Syria from the first year of its foundation, and the site of the British Syrian Training College. Beyrout has indeed been famous for its schools ever since the fourth century. The development of the old "Institution" into the Training College has already been referred to, but this was by no means the only centre of the Mission's activities. Other schools, including a Boys' School, a Night School and a Moslem School, sprang up in Beyrout or in its immediate vicinity, but the only two of these remaining to-day are the Practising School, so-called because the girls who are being trained as teachers practise teaching there, and the Pine Forest School, to which a further reference is made on page 99. (ED. See page 44 of this version)

The Bible Mission has for years laboured in Beyrout, and its work could be greatly extended did funds permit. After the War a Weaving School was started; but one of the oldest and best known branches of the work in the city is the Blind School, of which a short account may be given.

This was opened in 1868, and is the only Mission Blind School in Syria. There are two departments, one for men and lads of over fifteen years, and the other for girls. The premises where the inmates are housed and boarded are only separated from the Training College by a street, and are under the care of a Syrian and his wife, the former of whom teaches the blind men, while the girls are taught by a blind young woman, our pupil almost from babyhood. A Druze by birth, she was converted in our Blind School, and does excellent work among her young charges, of whom she is very fond.

Instruction is given in chair-caning and other forms of industrial work, and the prospect of being able to earn their own living instead of merely begging opens up undreamed-of possibilities. As in our other schools, Bible study holds the first place, and the pupils are taught to read the Braille type. 'There is a warm spiritual atmosphere among them, and even Moslems have been publicly received by baptism into the Christian Church.' Many stories could be told of men and women, boys and girls, whose lives have been transformed in the Blind School. One must suffice here.

Mahmoud was a wild bigoted Druze from the land of Bashan. Ring-leader of a band of robbers, he lost his sight while engaged on one of his plundering expeditions. One day a gleam of hope came to him in his sightless misery, for someone told him that there were people who welcomed, cared for and taught blind men. Could it be true? Like Bartimaeus of old Mahmoud believed, and braving the difficulties of the unknown road started out on his quest. Somehow he reached Beyrout, and one day stood before a brown gate in the wall of a big compound. The gate was opened; kind friends drew him in, and spoke words of cheer and comfort. Thus he became a pupil of the Blind School, and speedily fell into the ways of that cheerful busy community where Moslem, Jew, Druze and Christian lived together in perfect harmony.

Mahmoud learned to read; learned a trade. He heard for the first time of One Who, long ago, touched the eyes of the blind and restored their sight. He learned of sin and of the Saviour from sin, and the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ penetrated his dark heart, illuminating and transforming his life. After two years he went home to his old mother, and whole villages turned out to hear him read from his Braille Gospel so he in his turn became a missionary to his own people, passing on the Word of Life.

A short time more of happy work, and God called him Home through a furnace of suffering. Through weary months of poverty and terrible pain he never complained. The doctors who saw him in hospital reading from his Gospel painstakingly to a group of his fellow patients testified to the reality of his conversion. A day or two before his death Mahmoud asked to see one of our missionaries. She found him in a dark cheerless room in a Druze almshouse where his mother nursed him; a blind beggar shared the room, and bundles of rags were its only furnishing. Yet when she repeated the words about the 'Good Shepherd, familiar to him from his much fingered Gospel, and added the Psalmist's testimony - "The Lord is my Shepherd," he took up the words, so emphatic in the Arabic rendering, and made the testimony his own, - "I lack, and shall lack, nothing."

And so Mahmoud passed into the Land of Eternal Day to behold the Face of Him Whom having not seen he loved.

Hasbeiya.

Work was begun in Hasbeiya in 1862, only two years after the terrible massacre already described. It is a town of some four thousand inhabitants and may possibly be the same as the Baal-Gad or Baal-Hermon of the Bible. It is the most isolated of all our stations, and lies on the slopes of Mount Hermon not far from one of the sources of the Jordan. Hermon is a stronghold of the Druzes, but perhaps no single school in our out-stations is so varied in the creeds represented as Ellesmere School, as the mission building there is called. It is comprehensive, too the rank of its pupils, Moslem princesses and Druzes of high family sitting side by side with children of the artisan and peasant class. There are a number of villages within reach of Hasbeiya, and meetings and lantern services have been held in most of them, and at one time or another there have been fourteen schools in the district. Since the war our work has been reduced, and it is with great difficulty that the station has been kept open.

Zehleh.

Zahleh, opened in 1864, is situated in Coele-Syria, and has been called the "Rome of Syria," for it is a stronghold of Roman Catholicism. The B.S.M possesses a fine building called the "Bowen Thompson

School," built by Mrs. Hornby in 1896 and presented to the Mission. Of late years it has been rented by the American Mission, as the B.S.M. has been unable to supply workers. Seeing that there is a considerable population, and that almost medieval ignorance, superstition and bigotry are prevalent, it will be realised what scope there is here for aggressive evangelistic work.

Damascus.

Amid the growth and decay of the races, civilizations and religions which have thronged Syria for four thousand years," writes Sir George Adam Smith, Damascus. "Damascus has remained the one perennially great Syrian city."* She still is what the Bible called her years ago - "the head of Syria." Her origin is lost in the mists of bygone ages, but out of those mists comes marching, as in a pageant, many a well known figure - Abraham, David, Benhadad, Elisha, Alexander, Paul, Mohammed, Saladin, and many another, each in sonic way associated with the imperishable city. But the Apostle - he who entered the city not as a conqueror but as a blind man led by the hand - towers above them all; for the lessons he learnt there changed the history, not merely of Damascus, but of the world. "The street which is called Straight" may still be seen, but the great heathen Temple, one of the sights which must have greeted his newly opened eyes, was later swept away, and a Christian Church, named after John the Baptist, took its place. In A.D. 635 Damascus was captured by the Moslems; was for a hundred years the seat of the Caliphate; and is still today a bigoted Moslem city. But the Church, though turned into a Mosque and years ago rebuilt, still has its message; for, though centuries have rolled over it and fires have done their worst, yet cut in stone over an old doorway, long since disused, may still be read, in Greek, the words "Thy Kingdom, O Christ, is an Everlasting Kingdom, and Thy Dominion endureth throughout all generations."

**"The Historical Geography of the Holy Lands."*

Damascus, whose population has been estimated at from 200,000 to 300,000, is predominantly Moslem. Here the B.S.M. started work in 1867 and has now three schools - St. Paul's, at which the majority of the pupils are members of the Oriental Churches; the Francis Paynter or Central School, almost entirely Moslem; and the Meedan School, situated in a suburb called the Meedan, where the pupils are representative of various religions. In the case only of St. Paul's school is the building the property of the Mission.

Bible women have been at work in Damascus for years, and there are sewing and other classes. Simple medical work has been carried on, and there was formerly a blind school. There are endless opportunities for visiting, not only in the city but in the villages round.

That work in Damascus, as in all cities where Moslems are in the majority, has always been difficult, reports from our missionaries, and especially from Miss Butchart, who was for years in charge of the work there, testify. But not for a moment have they doubted that the Gospel has still the same power "to open their eyes" as it had in the days of the Apostle. Nor has the work ever been without its encouragements. "One little Moslem told me how truly she loved the Lord Jesus, and her daily life proves her words to be sincere," wrote Miss Butchart after she had had a talk on spiritual things with a number of her girls. "Another was a little Jewess who had been with us for sonic years. She also professed to love the Messiah, and her life also is in keeping with her words." The Druzes have always seemed willing to listen, and the Moslems have been increasingly accessible, but we long for much more than this. "One day the eyes of all will be opened," wrote Miss Butchart, "and they shall see Him Who is 'the Truth,' and all their doubts will be removed. We are praying and longing that some may

learn to trust and love Him now, and so be ready for Him at His Coming." In the same spirit the work is being carried on to-day.

Ainzahta.

Syria is a land of villages, and nowhere is this fact more evident than in the Lebanon mountains. Ainzahta has already been mentioned as the head quarters of our work there, and the little mission building, a legacy from Miss Thompson, serves as Mission House and School. Many of the surrounding villages have had schools from time to time, and our missionaries are warmly welcomed by the Druzes and others.

Work was started in the Lebanon in 1867 by Mrs. Bowen Thompson in person. She went to Ainzahta under the escort of His Excellency Daoud Pasha, the Governor General of the Lebanon, and a most enlightened man. He recognised the importance of establishing a good school, and agreed that Mrs. Thompson should have power to conduct it unfettered by any official regulations. The whole village turned out to see the arrival of the imposing cortege, and the work thus started has prospered ever since.

No one who had seen our Lebanon schools could ever forget the children; their simple charm, their love of school, their astonishing knowledge of Scripture and their unquestioning acceptance of Gospel truths make an indelible impression on the mind. Surely this branch of the work must be well pleasing in the sight of Him Who loved the mountains, and of Whom we read that "He went round about the villages teaching."

Tyre.

To the student of prophecy there are few more interesting places than Tyre. Founded nearly 3,000 years B.C. it became the chief city of Phoenicia, and the prophet Ezekiel gives a description of the eminence to which this island city had attained, and the depths to which it should fall. "The renowned city which was strong in the sea" was to have her walls destroyed and her towers broken down. She was to become "like the top of a rock" and "a place for the spreading of nets." These things came to pass, and even the casual visitor to-day may see that God's Word has been fulfilled to the letter.

The present town, on the mainland, has a population of about six thousand, the bulk of whom are Metawali Moslems and Greek Catholics. Work was begun by Mr. Mott in 1869, and the erection of a group of buildings was commenced in 1883. A Boys' School, a Girls' School, a Blind School, a Dispensary, Bible work among the fisher folk, visiting in the town and itineration in the neighbouring villages have all formed part of the work from time to time, but to-day the Girls' School, the Dispensary and the ordinary visiting in town and village, together with a Men's Reading Room, are the chief methods employed as evangelistic agencies. The villages in the district lying between Tyre and Galilee number about one hundred and sixty, and, although some of them are visited, there can be no question of systematic itineration without a larger staff.

The work in Tyre is very promising. The school children say that the Bible lesson is their favourite lesson, and those who come for treatment at the Dispensary are keen to listen to the preaching of the Gospel. "Do tell us about Jesus, we love to hear," say the women, and they mean it. Among the Moslems there are in Tyre, as elsewhere, those who are secret believers, but there are those, also, who

have openly confessed their faith in baptism. "The doors are open here in Tyre," writes one of our workers, "and we are always welcome in every home; the people want to hear the Gospel." Let us then see to it that as many as possible have the chance of hearing it, and let us pray that they who hear may be like those of whom it is written that "they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did came unto Him."

Baalbec

Baalbec lies among the foot-hills of the anti-Lebanon range at an altitude of 3,850 feet. Its Biblical name is uncertain, but it was later called Helio-polis, and is famous throughout the world for its Temples of the Roman period, and especially two of them, the larger dedicated to Jupiter-Baal, and the smaller to Bacchus. The town has a population of about four thousand, a large proportion being Metawali Moslems, and here the B.S.M. started work in 1874. The present building was erected by means of a fund raised in memory of Mrs. Henry Smith on a site presented by Mr. Mentor Mott. There are many villages within easy distance on the plain of Coele-Syria, and on the slopes of the two Lebanon ranges; a number of them have been visited, and in a few there have been schools. Before the War a Dispensary was an important part of the Mission's work in Baalbec, but since the station has been re-opened simple evangelistic work alone has been done. Baalbec is a centre full of possibilities.

Shimlan.

Shimlan is a mountain station on the Lebanon high above Beyrout, but since the War it has been closed. Here the Mission owns a building originally erected by Elizabeth Watson, who laboured in Shimlan for thirty years. It was taken over by the B.S.M. in 1900 and was used as a boarding and day school." We hear from time to time of old pupils - some in Druze or Moslem homes - who found great comfort and help in reading the words of our Lord in their old school Bibles," wrote Miss Stowell in 1913; but there is now no Bible teaching, for the school house stands empty. What has God in store for Shimlan?

The above is a very inadequate sketch of the work of our stations. Much more has been done in the past, and is being done today, but even so "there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." Perhaps some readers of this little book may begin to pray and to long with us for the day when Damascus will be, in very truth, a "city of My joy"; when "the daughter of Tyre," nay, when her sons and daughters in their thousands, 'shall be there with a gift," when "Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field and when "Hermon shall rejoice in Thy Name" - "for they shall all know Me from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

CHAPTER XI.

1919-1929, A Fresh Start.

Aftermath of War.

The work of the seventh decade of the Mission's existence was perhaps the most difficult of all. It is easier to destroy than to restore, and the Aftermath reconstruction of our work which had suffered so grievously during the past four years was made more difficult owing to problems which the war had left. It meant, indeed, a fresh start, but a start hampered by various commitments - girls partly trained, buildings extensively damaged, equipment looted - the discharge of which meant the further depletion of an already impoverished exchequer. During the ten years the work was gradually put on its pre-war basis, but the whole period may be considered as one of transition. A few of the difficulties, some of them temporary, others continuing throughout the period, may be mentioned.

The lapse of time was in itself a difficulty. The work had been interrupted for a period of practically five years, and this meant that during that time no recruits for the field had been enlisted. Although candidates, and especially candidates for temporary service, began to come forward there remained, even to some extent at the close of the decade, a hiatus between the older workers and the more recent recruits who had neither the experience nor the knowledge of Arabic required to fit them for the more responsible posts.

Damaged buildings were a problem which cried for an immediate solution, and the most essential work was put in hand at once, the rest being delayed until funds became available. In the case of Baalbec, for instance, the repairs to the Mission House were not completed until 1928. It will be understood that all this involved the Mission in considerable expenditure, but a certain amount of compensation for damage done was received through the Commission for the Assessment of Damage Suffered in Turkey.

The increased cost of everything was another terrible stumbling block. The cost of a village school, for instance, instead of being, as before the war, from £12 to £20 was reported by Miss Johnston in 1920 to be from £48 to £60, and the price of other things had risen in proportion. The value of the currency, too, underwent violent fluctuations in sympathy with the French franc, and this added to the troubles of those on the field. Another thing, which was not a direct outcome of the war but which tended to increase the cost of the work, was that fewer missionaries were in a position to serve in an honorary capacity, while grants in aid of Bible women formerly made by the British and Foreign Bible Society were no longer available. Various societies, and among them the British and Foreign Bible Society and the National Bible Society of Scotland, had in the past helped our work, and the former had given us an annual grant of some £130, which had helped towards the support of a varying number of Bible women and Scripture readers. That Society had, however, changed its policy in this matter, feeling that pastoral work was hardly within its province and that such grants did not materially increase the circulation of the Scriptures. The cost of the Mission both at home and abroad had thus grown enormously.

In the last completed year before the war all the stations were open, there were 36 schools, staffed by 78 Syrian teachers, and the Bible women and Scripture readers were 12 in number. In 1928, the last year for which complete figures are available, Shimlan was closed, our buildings at Zahleh were

occupied by the Americans, Baalbec was only re-opened at the end of the year, the number of schools was reduced to 16 staffed by 36 Syrian teachers, and the Bible women numbered seven; the strength of the European staff was about the same in each year. And yet this curtailment of our activities was followed not by a diminution, but by a great increase, in expenditure. The actual cost of the work in the field, which in 1914 was £5,300, had risen in 1920 to £8,800, while the total cost of administering the Mission both at home and in the field had doubled, and this in spite of the observance of the most rigid economy.

Relief work among the poor and destitute was in the run probably helpful to our work, for the kindness received was instrumental in opening hearts and homes. Yet at the outset it proved somewhat of a hindrance, for the Training College in Beyrout and St. Paul's School in Damascus were employed as relief centres, and for this reason the re-opening of the Mission had to be delayed.

The Political situation had undergone a startling change. The Turk had been driven out of the country, and the government of Syria was for a time subjected to various vicissitudes. Even the establishment of the French Mandate did not at once bring the peace that was so much needed, and in any case readjustment to a new political environment constituted for the Mission, no less than for the people of Syria, a problem of some magnitude.

The Work Re-opens.

But in spite of all difficulties the work was gradually restarted. The Training College was the first to re-open, in 1920, although even before this there had been a school there. Sitt Marie Kessab, one of our former senior teachers and the daughter of M. Selim Kessab, daughter opened a school in her own home and kept it going throughout the war, and as soon as our buildings were handed back, and even before Miss Johnston's arrival in Beyrout, she had sought and obtained permission to have her school there. The little Pine Forest School was re-opened at the same time as the Training College, and the Damascus Schools followed soon after. Miss Stowell returned to Shimlan, but the boarding school there was never re-opened owing to the lack of funds, although for some time the building was occupied by a number off Armenian orphans. Our building at Zahleh was given over to American Red Cross work, and the American Mission subsequently started a school in it. Our remaining stations were gradually re-opened as personnel and funds permitted - Ainzahalta (if it could ever be said to have been closed!) in 1920, the Blind Schools at Beyrout in 1922, Tyre in 1923, Hasbeiya in 1924, and Baalbec in 1928. But in most cases the work was, for a time at any rate, on a restricted scale, and the Syrian teachers at Ainzahalta and Hasbeiya had to carry on for long periods without any resident European missionary. Indeed, the helpfulness of the Syrian members of the Mission at this difficult time was a cause for deep thankfulness. "All have been simply splendid in helping to restart the work," wrote Miss R. C. Fitzpatrick from the Training College, "and have set a high standard throughout. I do not know what we should have done without them."

It was a great joy to our workers to feel that they were great they once more in touch with those who throughout the past years had been so much in their thoughts and prayers. But here again the war had left its mark. "One of the first things that struck me" says the same writer, "was their great need of spiritual help after the black, black years.' God is nothing to me now,' said one; but another remarked 'Truly if it had not been for prayer and knowing that God is good we could not have gone on.'" So here, as all the world over, sorrow had driven some from God and drawn others closer to Him, and our workers grappled with the task of trying to bring some back, to lead others on, and to re-inspire all

with the thought of witness and service for Christ.

Changed Conditions.

The message which our missionaries were carrying was thus the same, but the conditions under which it was being told were changing. Syria was not immune from the process of Westernization which was sweeping over the Orient, and which the war had done much to hasten. The "Unchanging East" was becoming the "Changing East." Syrians were awakening to a sense of national consciousness. The trappings of Western civilization - electric light, trams, cinemas and the like - were everywhere in evidence. Even dress was changing, and Paris fashions took their place alongside the old Eastern modes. Travellers in the Holy Land complained that much of its picturesqueness was disappearing. But if the country is to develop, as the Bible says it will, the development must be on modern lines. And this will not damp the ardour of the missionary hearted, for he knows that beneath the veneer of civilization the same human heart needs the same Gospel Message.

Another change which had a great influence on mission work was improved methods of transport. It was only in 1897 that the first train steamed from Beyrout to Damascus, and motor cars were practically non-existent in Syria before the war. But now horse transport was largely superseded by the motor car, with the result that the farthest station, Hasbeiya, was brought within five hours of Beyrout, whereas formerly the journey took three days.

A new demand for a higher standard of education had grown up, and this not only in the towns but in the villages as well. "It is in the atmosphere of Christian schools, under the influence of Christ-like teachers, that there is the greatest hope of winning to Christ those who will become Christian leaders in home and country," and this increasing thirst for knowledge, while it opened up new avenues of opportunity to those in charge of the Mission schools, yet laid a fresh burden of responsibility upon them.

Another change which was gradually making itself felt was the spread of greater religious freedom. In the case of Moslems the abolition of the Caliphate had probably something to do with this. Since the fourteenth century the Sultan of Turkey had assumed the title of Khalifah, and it was claimed for him that he had spiritual authority over Moslems who were not actually his subjects. When Turkey entered the war in 1914 political use was made of this claim, and the struggle was proclaimed to be a "Jihad" or Holy War, in which all Moslems were called upon to fight in defence of the Khalifah. The lack of response to this appeal revealed the unreality of this assumption of authority, and from that time the prestige of the Caliphate appeared to decline, until in 1924 the then Khalifah was sent into exile and the Caliphate abolished. In many quarters, however, great consternation was aroused by the disappearance of an Institution which had served as a rallying point for the ideal of the unity of the Moslem world.

But it was not only the Moslems who were professing an open interest in Christianity; a similar attitude was observable among the Jews. Twenty years previously a Jew had threatened to kill one of our Bible women if she dared to return to his home to read the Bible, while now Jews would stop her in the street and ask her to visit them for the purpose of reading to them the New Testament.

French Mandate.

It was thus becoming possible to sow the Seed with a real hope of having a share also in the reaping.

One of the greatest changes that the war brought about in Syria was the replacement of Turkish rule by the French Mandate. The French had considered Syria to be within their sphere of influence for many years past, and the disturbances of 1860, already described, brought about a temporary French occupation. In 1912 the Premier, M. Poincare declared in the Senate that the French had traditional interests in Syria which they intended to have respected, and when Turkey entered the war France promptly asserted her claims in the Levant, which, as far as Syria was concerned, were never questioned. It could hardly be a matter for surprise, then, that the supreme council of the Allies formally agreed at San Remo that the Mandate for Syria should be allotted to France. The Mandate became fully effective on September 29th, 1923, and Syria was formally detached from the Ottoman Empire in August, 1924.

While the fact that France had become the Mandatory power could not but have a profound influence on our work, the fears of those who thought that it might threaten the very existence of British Protestant Missions proved groundless, for, by the terms of a convention signed by representatives of the French and British Governments, schools being carried on by French and British nationals in respect of areas covered by the Mandates of France for Syria, and England for Palestine and Mesopotamia, were to be allowed to continue their work freely. The French loyally adopted a policy of non-interference, and in many instances showed real friendliness to our work and workers.

The Druze Rebellion.

During the years succeeding the war the turbulent element in Syria caused considerable unrest from time to time in various parts of the country, culminating in the Druze rebellion which broke out in July, 1925, and which collapsed nearly a year later. The situation in Damascus became so serious that the French were compelled to bombard the city for forty-eight hours from October 18th. In spite of considerable personal danger our missionaries, Miss Harrison, Miss Bennison and Miss Strong, remained at their posts, and by their example cheered and calmed those who otherwise might have been seized with panic. Our schools, except the one in the Meedan, which was in the hands of the enemy, were kept open, and, although conditions made it impossible to visit the neighbouring villages, work was commenced among the many refugees who flocked into the city.

Hasbeiya was another storm centre, and when it fell into the hands of the insurgents Miss Cave remained there for some days. The Mission House, over which she had hoisted a Union Jack made by herself, became a rallying centre for the Christians in the town, and, while the French aeroplanes were dropping bombs, they sang such choruses as "I have a Saviour Who's mighty to keep," and "I believe God answers prayer," for the encouragement of themselves and especially of the children.

One of the Druze leaders promised that Miss Cave should not be molested, and when at length she left the town with the few Christians who remained he gave her a safe conduct, a tribute, surely, to the respect which through the past years Druzes had come to feel for Christian Missions.

Progress of the Work.

In spite of all the difficulties and the changed conditions the work went steadily forward. Indeed, what might have appeared to be stumbling blocks were sometimes stepping stones to fresh opportunities. The Weaving School, for instance, started in 1920, under the superintendence of Miss Lepper, was a direct outcome of the distress caused by the war, and became an integral part of the work of the Mission. The Druze rebellion was responsible for the commencement of efforts to reach the refugee

girls in Damascus, and this developed into regular work among village girls, a number of whom were boarded in Damascus with a view to systematic Bible study, and in the hopes that some of them might become Bible women, or would at any rate carry the Gospel Message back to their own villages. For the villagers were still woefully ignorant of the Gospel. "We taught them 'Come unto Me,' " wrote Miss Harrison of one of her village trips," and asked if there was anyone tired among them. They pointed to one woman and said, 'That one is tired,' and she looked it indeed! Then we spoke of Jesus taking away our sins, but the time was so short and they so ignorant. They asked why we had conic to them, and we told them it was just to tell them of Jesus. Then they pointed to where other 'tired ones' were to be found, perhaps not grasping that the greatest weariness comes from sin."

Among the changed conditions which characterized this decade the advent of the motor car has been mentioned, and this provided increased facilities for itineration, and no one can read reports for these years without being struck by the ever-growing emphasis which was being laid on this side of the work, especially in view of the fact that there were fewer schools and fewer opportunities for opening them. Our missionaries visited the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, the hamlets of Lebanon, the villages round Baalbec and Damascus, and from time to time took trips to the Hauran - cars, horses, donkeys, camels, and tents all playing their part in these expeditions.

A dispensary at Tyre, in full swing, and simple medical work in Ainzahalta and Damascus, provided welcome methods of approach to many a home which it might not otherwise have been possible to reach. Prisons were visited; literature was distributed; a lending library at Ainzahalta and a reading room at Tyre were opened; classes of various sorts were held; and a welcome sign of the growing missionary spirit among Syrian Christians was the realisation of the need of personal work. To this end societies, called (to give the literal Arabic translation) "Societies of Guidance in the Evangelization of individuals," were formed at Damascus and Tyre, the members of which met together periodically for study and discussion and to pray for the conversion of Jews, Moslems and Druzes.

Moslem converts were here and there beginning to realise responsibility for open confession and baptism, and an address by a young baptised Moslem convert on the conversion of St. Paul and the theme of the New Birth in the presence of his old associates was a cause for great thankfulness. But open confessions were few, and the disappointments inseparable from Moslem work numerous; and yet there was abundant evidence that the Message was going home to many a heart.

"Who can tell me," said one of our missionaries to a class of Moslem women, "the greatest thing God has done for us?" With tears running down her cheeks a poor woman answered "He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for us; He shed His precious blood on the Cross for me, a poor Moslem."

The schools continued to prosper, and were as always the means of definite spiritual blessing. In the case of the Training College an important decision had to be made. The American University at Beyrout opened its doors to women, and the question arose as to whether or not we should take a part in preparing girls for the University course. It was eventually decided that the Americans should undertake that, while we concentrated on the training of teachers, a division of work with which we were well satisfied, for it was in keeping with the spirit of our traditions that we should have the training of those who in turn would become the winners of other children for Christ. An encouraging feature of the school work was the steady increase in the proportion of non-Christians enrolled, due

no doubt to the growth of religious freedom to which reference has been made. In the Training College, as elsewhere, the Bible continued to hold the foremost place, and the Message came home with the same reality as of old even to the smallest child. "It was interesting," we are told, "to see how touched the little Moslems were by the story of the Crucifixion, following on the stories of the Life of Jesus. They felt it so sad that He should die that some of them wept bitterly." When Miss Johnston was giving the older girls talks on Christian Missions to non-Christian peoples she asked what they would select as the Gospel Message. "That everything has been done; there is nothing left for them to do," answered one girl, with a joyous smile – and yet she was down in the school register as a non-Christian

The teaching in our schools has always been eminently practical, and whether the lesson happens to be Scripture or some purely secular subject the main object of the Mission is always kept in view. The truth of this is well illustrated by a story which we give in Miss Johnston's own words. The Pine Forest School, at which the incident occurred, is a little school on the outskirts of Beyrout, almost wholly Moslem and originally started for the children of Bedouins. The teacher, Sitt Rogina, who has now passed to her rest, was trained at the Institution in its early days, and became one of our teachers in Damascus. During the last sixteen years of her life the school in the Pine Forest was her home, and she lavished care and affection on the boys and girls who warmly responded to it. "She had been, at their request," writes Miss Johnston, "telling them in full detail the wonderful story of 'Passion Week,' and as the Great Feast of the Christians was approaching they wanted to know what it was all about, and to hear the end of the wonderful story of the Lord Jesus. Then they learned of the washing of the feet, and as the question was asked 'How would you have liked to do that for one another!' she noted the curl of the lip and sniff of aversion as heads were turned aside. 'Very well, if that is your spirit it was not the spirit of the Lord. Ahmed, fetch the basin.'

"That was how it began. The first efforts were very unwilling and slow, but as the performance went on zeal developed until, when the teacher said 'Now it is my turn,' and stooped to wash little Fatmeh's dirty toes, reluctantly slipped out of her wooden clogs, the head boy rose impetuously 'No, my teacher, that cannot be. Let me do it for you.' But that could not be allowed, so the children looked on shamefacedly while the simple service was carried through, and rows of clean bare feet dangled from the benches. Then the moral was applied, or rather, for that was not needed, the application was widened until the claim for willing, humble service included much more than the literal foot washing they had learned to practise. And the story could not stop here. 'Tell us, my teacher, about the Death of the Lord Christ.' So the tragic tale went on, and arithmetic and reading went to the winds that day. 'Wasn't it best? They wanted to hear, and isn't that what our schools are for? It is not only reading and writing we care about. So I told them, and they would not let me stop till first the girls, and then myself, and then the boys, were all crying as they listened, and I told till we came to the end.' "

"Is it not worth while," adds Miss Johnston, "upholding such by our prayers? "

The Home Base.

At home, too, these ten years were difficult ones. The tremendous rise in the cost of carrying on the work in Syria made the provision of extra funds a necessity, and this at a time when funds were very difficult to obtain. The claims of benevolent institutions at home which had become impoverished during the war, the phenomenally high taxation, and the increase in the number of Christian Missions, in itself a matter for deep thankfulness, all made the task more difficult. It was recognised

that if the support which was essential was to be forthcoming the Mission must be better known, and with this end in view several changes were introduced. The offices were moved to London in 1925, and were located in Mary Sumner House, Westminster. In the same year, too, it was decided to adopt the principle of holding the Annual Meetings in May, so as to secure the attendance of those who came to London for the purpose of attending the "May Meetings." From 1925 onward annual Conferences of workers and friends of the Mission were held at High Leigh and proved increasingly successful. A new policy with regard to literature was introduced, leaflets for free distribution largely taking the place of booklets for sale. "Thanks Boxes," introduced for the first time in 1922, became a feature of the work, several thousands being in circulation at the end of the decade. Special measures were taken to ensure wider and more definite remembrance of the needs of the Mission in prayer, and an attempt was made to secure fresh interest through the medium of the religious press. An increasing amount of deputation work was done, and the policy followed by other societies of retaining missionaries still on active service for deputation work became a regular practice. A determined attempt, too, was made to interest young people. In former years there had been a Children's Association at Wimbledon called "The Syrian Beehive," while in 1910 Mrs. Bristowe, a very warm friend of the Mission and a member of the Committee for thirty years, had started the young people's league called the "Jubilee League" already referred to, the object being to raise £1,000 for the Lebanon School Fund. But now the need for something more comprehensive was beginning to be felt, and a Young People's Branch, called "Friends of Syria," was started in 1925.

Dr. Handley Moule, who had been first Patron and then President of the Mission since 1901, died in 1920, and was succeeded as President by Lord Radstock in 1922. The London Office was honoured by visits from Her Majesty Queen Mary on February 27th, 1926, and from Princess Mary, Viscountess Lascelles, on May 12th of the same year.

Overseas.

One of the most important features of this ten year period was the development of interest Overseas. There had in the past been several links with our Colonies and Dominions. Bishop Barker, of Sydney, had visited the work in Syria, in which he became deeply interested, and when the management of the Mission was transferred to Mrs. Mentor Mott and Mrs. Henry Smith it was at his invitation that, in 1877, a meeting was held in London at which a consultative Council was formed, and he himself accepted the post of Patron. Moreover, probably as a result of his influence, a branch was formed in Sydney which supported a girl at one of our schools. In the same year Bishop Perry, of Melbourne, became President and remained so until he died in 1882. In South Australia two friends, Mrs. Evans and the Hon. J. H. Angas, for years supported the Boys' School at Beyrout. In New Zealand two of our retired missionaries, Miss Bellamy and Miss Werner, found work among the Syrian emigrants there in 1903, and thus helped to awaken interest in work in Syria, while in South Africa Miss Brown was doing much the same work among Syrians in Johannesburg.

In 1924 and 1925 Miss Harrison, who was spending her furlough in New Zealand, held a number of meetings in centres both there and in Australia, while in 1928 the writer toured in both countries, consolidating the work begun by Miss Harrison and forging still further Links. He also visited South Africa, and in all three countries friends were made, honorary secretaries appointed and Councils formed, which very speedily proved a valuable source of strength.

And so these ten years, which had opened under the shadow of a great calamity, closed in an atmosphere of peace and hope.

CHAPTER XII.

1930 - ? The Future.

"Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" The watchman said, "The morning cometh." How often the quotation is cut short there! But the watchman added "and also the night," - "The morning cometh and also the night." The Light that shineth more and more unto the Perfect Day had not yet dawned. So often the morning has seemed to dawn in Syria, but always to be succeeded by the night. It must have seemed morning, a morning without clouds, when the Imperial Firman was granted and the way appeared open for unlimited extension; but too soon clouds of all sorts darkened the horizon. Again in 1908 it must have seemed morning, a day of clear shining after rain, when civil and religious liberty was proclaimed throughout the Turkish Empire. But darkness, the darkness of cruelty and outrage, drew on apace. The year 1914, too, was morning time, the work in full swing, all the stations opened, and prospects for the future bright. But the land was soon shrouded in the night of war. Today once more the sun is shining, but who knows whether shadows may not lie ahead?

But we can praise and thank God for real progress made during the past seventy years. One of the most inspiring sights in the world is to stand on a mountain top and watch the day break. The highest peaks catch the first rays of the sun long before the sun itself is visible; the valleys are still shrouded in darkness. As the sun climbs the heavens the long shadows thrown by the mountains slowly shorten and the morning mists disappear, until the whole world seems flooded with light. "Until the day dawn and the shadows flee away"! The clay has dawned in Syria; on many sides gleams of light are visible. But there are deep shadows still - the shadow of false religions, the shadow of women and little children still in bondage, the shadow of suspicion and intolerance, the shadow of apathy among the Christians, and many other shadows beside. Our prayer is that as, through the ministry of His servants at home and in the field, the love of God in Christ is more widely shed abroad the mists of ignorance may disperse - the shadows gradually pass. But they will not wholly "flee away" until the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings - until He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

Syria is a land where God still seems to speak through visions. There are many cases of those whose definite decision to follow the Lord has been brought about through dreams in which He has spoken to them. And we too have our visions of the future - Visions of a time when the work will go forward without any restrictions; when funds will be plentiful; when the one desire of all Christians will be to forward the preaching of the Gospel in the regions beyond; when they will sacrifice everything to that end - Visions, too, of a day when there will be no need of any European missionary in Syria, for the Syrian Christians themselves will be so burdened with the souls of their fellow countrymen that they will go forth and preach everywhere, "the Lord working with them" Visions, finally, of the Great Day when in Syria there shall be no more need of preaching, for there shall be neither Greek nor Jew, Druze nor Moslem, Barbarian, Syrian, bond nor free, but Christ shall be "All, and in all."

May the Lord hasten that day for His Name's sake.

REMEMBER SYRIA.

FROM the far Syrian lands are voices calling,
The lands whence first the blessed tidings came,
Those Messages to-day our hearts enthralling -
That wondrous Gospel evermore the same.

The Grace that was on Calvary's Cross victorious,
The Love that waited once by Sychar's Well,
The Voice that brought to Paul the Message glorious,
Then sent him "far" away its joy to tell;

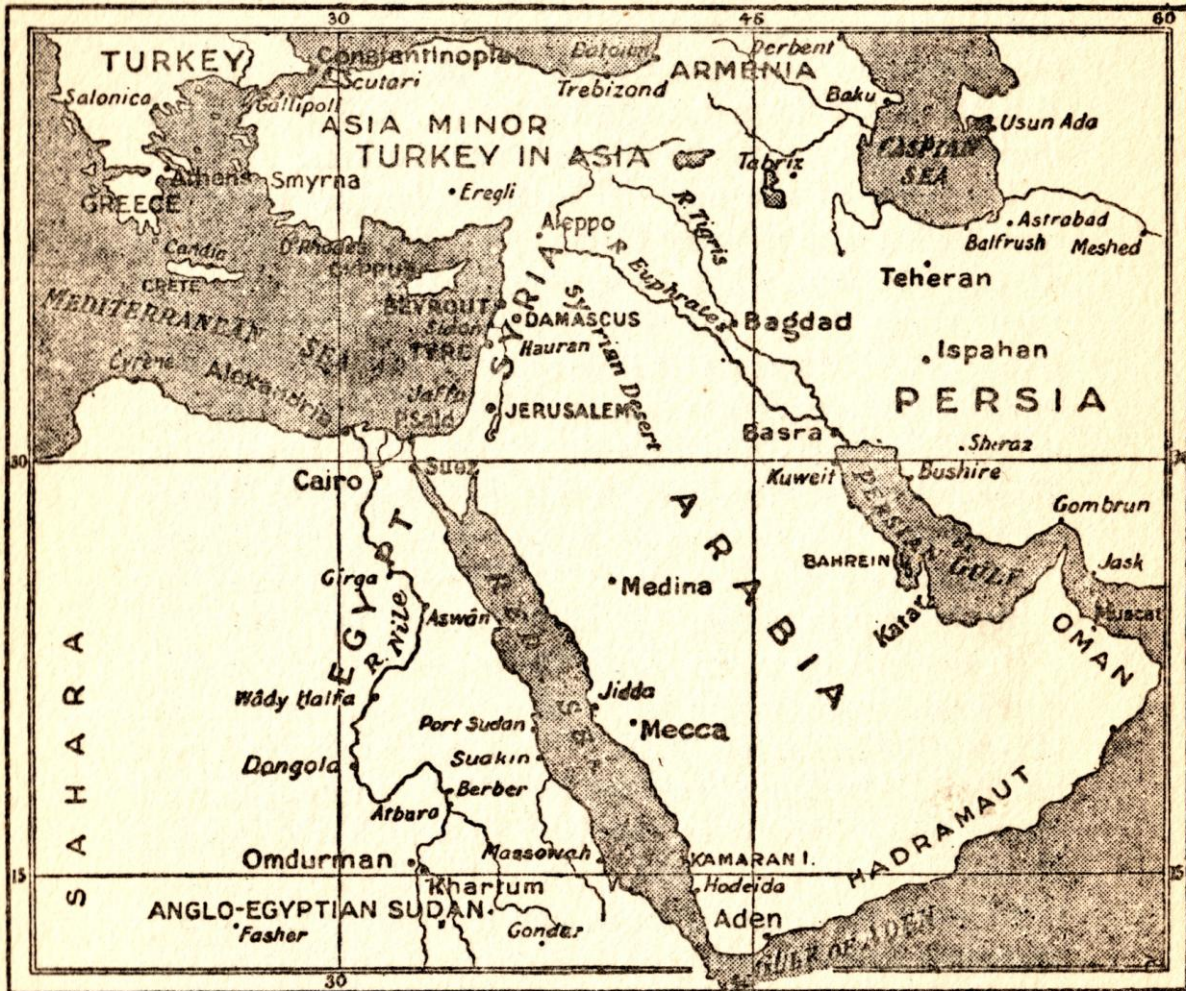
Darkness has brooded where the Light seemed breaking.
To other lands Christ's Messengers have gone,
The sunshine of the Gospel with them taking,
The while it faded where it first had shone.

Through centuries of change this Gospel liveth,
Hearts in that Land are seeking Christ to-day,
Oh, ye who know the blessedness He giveth,
Remember Syria as you work and pray.

CONSTANCE LADY COOTE.

Syria in relation to the Moslem Lands of the Near East.

(Showing also its position within the boundaries of the Promised Land).



"The Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt* unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15, 18).

"By faith Abraham sojourned in the Land of Promise." (Heb. 11, 8-9).

"The children went in and possessed the land. Nevertheless they were disobedient, therefore thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies." (Neh. 9, 24-27).

"I will bring them again to this land : and I will give them an heart to know Me, and they shall be My people, and I will be their God." (Jer. 24, 6-7).

* The "river of Egypt" is commonly supposed to be not the Nile but a small stream running between Palestine and Egypt.



INITIATED DRUZES.

“A zeal of God, but not according to knowledge” (Romans 10, 2).



DRUZE CHILDREN.



VEILED MOSLEM WOMEN.

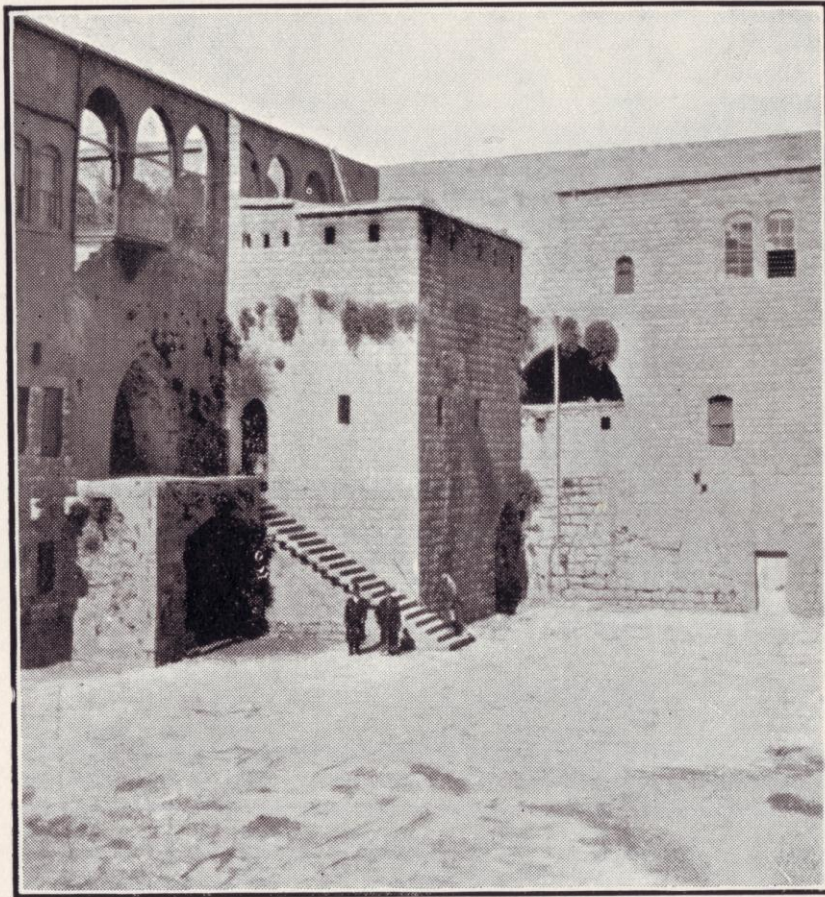
"I will make darkness light before them" (Isaiah 42, 16).



MRS. BOWEN THOMPSON.
FOUNDRRESS OF THE BRITISH SYRIAN MISSION.

“A great woman”
(2 Kings 4, 8).

“Full of good works”
(Acts 9, 36).



COURTYARD OF SERAIA AT HASBEIYA.
THE SCENE OF THE MASSACRE.

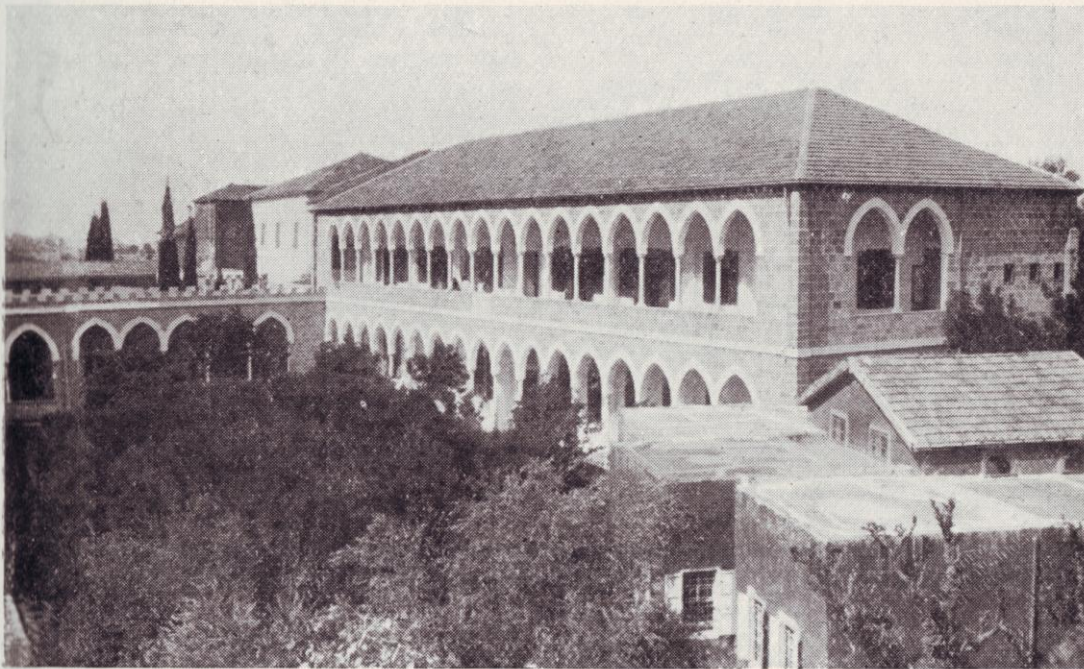


TYRE, APPROACHING FROM THE NORTH.

“ As for our transgressions Thou shalt purge them away ” (Psalm 65, 3).



OLD BUILDING.



JUBILEE WING.

BRITISH SYRIAN TRAINING COLLEGE.

“The whole limit thereof round about shall be most holy” (Ezekiel 43, 12).



MUALLIM SELIM KESSAB.

"A good man and full of faith" (Acts 11, 24).



George Aoud

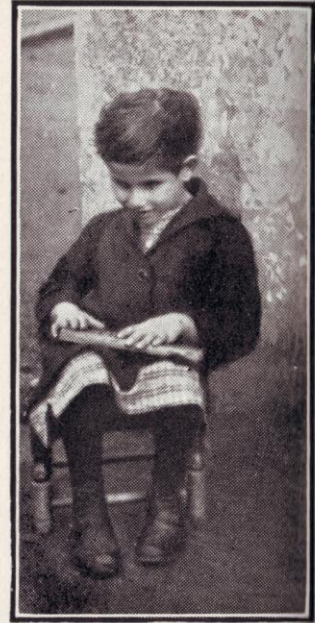
"Ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Acts 5, 42).



(2)



(1)



(3)



(4)



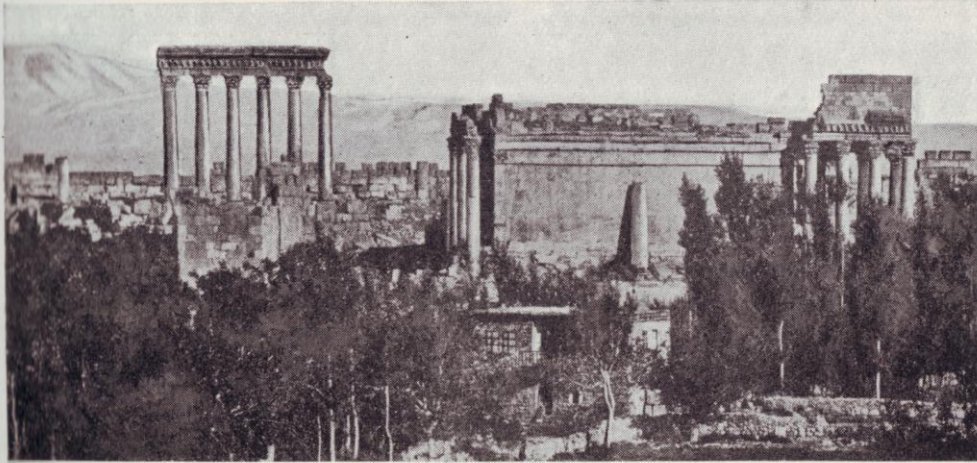
(5)



(6)

- (1) A Little Moslem.
- (2) A Promising Pupil.
- (3) In the Blind School.
- (4) Two Blind Pupils.
- (5) "Raw Material."
- (6) A Village Girl.

"Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My Name receiveth Me" (Mark 9, 37).



BAALBEC—A NEEDY CENTRE.



A BIBLE WOMAN.



BEDOUIN WOMEN.

“Holding forth the Word of Life” (Philippians, 2, 16).



DAMASCUS.



AINZHALTA.

“He went throughout every city and village preaching” (Luke 8, 1).



LITTLE PEOPLE AT THE TRAINING COLLEGE.



AT THE DISPENSARY.

"Suffer little children to come unto Me" (Lu'ke 18, 16).