

NOTES ON CURRENT TOPICS

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The Moslem World at Zürich.

The dominating note at the World's Sunday School Convention, held in Zürich, July 8—15th, was unquestionably the Moslem world problem, particularly as related to Moslem children.

The Convention manifested intense interest in the work in Moslem Lands; an intelligent conviction that the Moslem question is the outstanding problem confronting Christendom; and a firm determination to push vigorously the battle for the conquest of the Moslem child for Christ.

The significance of this is indicated by the fact that, in this record World's Sunday School Convention, there were 2,590 registered delegates from all parts of the world, representing all the great evangelical churches. There were also thousands of unregistered visitors.

Thursday afternoon a Conference of Workers in Moslem Lands, held under the joint presidency of Bishop Hartzell and Dr. Zwemer, was attended by four hundred persons although there were four other sectional meetings of the Convention in session at the same time.

The Friday evening session of the entire Convention in the great Tonhalle was devoted to the report of the special Commission on Mohammedan Lands, followed by five brief thrilling addresses from missionaries to the Moslems. The report of the Commission, which was prepared by Bishop Hartzell and Dr. Zwemer on the basis of the replies to five hundred letters, each containing a Questionnaire, which were sent to prominent missionaries in all Moslem lands, is the most comprehensive and complete presentation of the Moslem problem, particularly as to children, yet presented to the Christian world.

The Convention was deeply stirred as perhaps by no other item before it, by the eloquent and impressive address of Bishop Hartzell summarizing the Report of the Commission.

The significant practical outcome was the decision to put a General Secretary for the Moslem world into the field, with headquarters in Cairo, under the direction of a small Continuation Committee, to be supported by both the American and British sections of the Association, thus again emphasizing the unity of the Moslem problem. A special secretary was also provided for Turkey, and others will be appointed in due time to the great Mohammedan centres.

In the final appeal made by the Executive Committee for increased funds, the needs of the Mohammedan world were placed first. Mr. E. K. Warren, in his closing address, again emphasized this as the great task confronting the church. Let it be repeated that the outstanding feature of the Convention was its consideration of, and action concerning, the Moslem world problem.

Algiers, July, 1913.

EDWIN F. FREASE.

Protecting the Ka'ba.

IN a recent number of *El Manar*, published in Cairo, the proposition is put forward that, whereas Islam has lost all its temporal power and the Turks have been so utterly defeated on the battle-field and in diplomacy, the time has come to protect the Hejaz against foreign aggression. It is seriously proposed that modern fortifications shall be built around Medina and Mecca, and that both cities shall be prepared against invasion by the most modern armaments. In the same article it is suggested that a university should be opened at Medina, making it the future centre of learning for the Moslem world. This counsel of desperation indicates how deeply the Moslems feel the political defeat of Turkey and the hopeless state of affairs in Constantinople.

From the *Times* Lucknow correspondent, we learn that a Moslem society has been formed at Lucknow, styled Khuddam Ka'ba, to protect the Ka'ba and other holy places of Islam from non-Moslem aggression. Every Moslem on joining takes an oath to be ready with life and property to protect the Ka'ba, and pays one Rupee yearly. One-third of the subscriptions raised will be remitted to the Sultan annually for defensive purposes. It is proposed to extend the organization throughout India.

Present Conditions in Persia.

Our missionary correspondent at Resht writes of present conditions in Persia, especially in relation to the Russian occupation, as follows :

" Our attitude is that of Cyrus Hamlin toward the Russian Ambassador : Our Lord Jesus Christ will not ask the Lord of all the Russians where He may plant His feet, and we are busy striking roots so deep that we cannot be removed. Of news there is great indefiniteness. No one seems to know just how things are being adjusted, but recently there has been a suggestion of activity in the various government departments that suggests a working basis has been found among the various conflicting elements, so that some funds have become available. In the bazaar it is rumored that the Belgians have been placed in charge of the government work, almost as receivers. The Belgians have long overseen the Customs, and at one time had charge of posts and telegraphs. They were removed from each department except the customs at the time of the revolution, but after Mr. Shuster's overthrow the Belgian chief of Customs was made acting Treasurer-General. For a time there was a sort of deadlock between the Bakhtiari ministry and the Treasurer. They would not confirm him but could not put him out. Lately there has been a change of ministry, and these signs of life are appearing. I imagine the truth is, that the new ministry is accepting this gentleman's guidance, and, therefore, I hope that there will be greater peace throughout the country. I have never heard any criticism of his sincerity or ability. The people oppose him, if at all, because of his pro-Russian sympathies. They will do well, however, to accept the inevitable, and seek to restore peace and prosperity."

Moslem Methods in South Africa.

Missionaries in South Africa report that " For years there has been a movement on the part of Malays to win over the white and colored, whether Christians or Jews, and this has so far succeeded that though

people know and see it everyday, yet they are so accustomed to the evil growing insidiously amongst them, that they do not seem to take notice of it."

Both Malays and Indian Mohammedans are active in securing converts for Islam by marrying white women and girls by Mohammedan rites, adopting white children, and in the case of Indian Mohammedans this activity is strengthened by the hope of winning merit in Paradise because of the converts secured.

"The Christians are very ignorant of the difference between their own religion and the Mohammedan; they speak of the mullah as priest, of the imam as bishop, the mosque as church, the Koran as Bible. In order to deceive the Christians, Mohammedans seem to have some rites that take the place of Baptism and Holy Communion, called by the same name; also some rite of circumcising girls (a Gamuzi rite) when they assume a Mohammedan name and are converted. The last census shows there is a decided increase among the Mohammedans, and that they have one divorce for every four marriages, which is more than the heathen Kafirs and Bechuanaas.

"There are some Arab, Indian, Egyptian, and Turkish propagators of Mohammedanism who are very actively engaged in spreading their faith up and down the country by Koranic schools, charms, sorcery, threats, and immorality. A man makes a practice of taking a Christian wife, and after he has made sure of her he leaves her and takes another, and yet another. The law in this country does not recognize Mohammedan marriage as legal, and recognizes concubinage, but to the Mohammedan it is proper marriage plus conversion, so they strive to have as many Christian wives as they possibly can, and they cannot be punished either for polygamy or for desertion, as the marriage is not considered legal.

"It is painful beyond description to see everywhere white and colored, who once were Christian or Jewish children, now adults bearing Mohammedan names, wearing the Malay head-dress, often, alas! decorated with charms, and it is marvellous to see what a difference this has brought about—moral deterioration, aloofness, hatred, antagonism to their former co-religionists and nationality."

A New Moslem Review.

An Indian Moslem of a new school, Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, is publishing a new monthly entitled *Muslim India and Islamic Review*. Its object is to set forth the modern view of Islam, apologizing for everything in it that does not meet with Christians ideals, and showing the weakness of modern Christianity from the Moslem standpoint and the difficulties of its dogma. The second number contains an account of an interesting debate, held at Cambridge, on Polygamy. The editor of the magazine, in speaking on this subject, said: "It is not in the spirit of an advocate, though lawyer I am, that I approach the subject, but as a believer in the truth of the proposition under discussion. I do not only assert, but I do believe, when I say that polygamy has been, is, and will be a useful institution to human society, under the given conditions prescribed by the Moslem Jurists, to bring the said institution into action. It is not an institution which is peculiar to Islam, but an institution to which almost all the nations of the world, in every place and time, without distinction of creed or color, no matter whatever their culture or civilization was, have given universal assent and practical support. You may theorise as much

as you can, you cannot ignore hard fact. Polygamy, if allowed under law in certain communities, is certainly practised under usage in the other. If the East is polygamous by law, the West is not less the same by practice and custom."

Constitutional Government in Afghanistan.

A writer who calls himself "*Durrani*" contributes an interesting article in the *Hindustan Review* for March on this subject. He is not enthusiastic regarding the results of this reform elsewhere.

"What was thought to be a healing balm proved a most deadly poison, and what was regarded as an invigorating tonic turned into a weakening draught. Turkey and Persia are living examples. In the former the introduction of the so much hailed constitution proved the loss of one province after the other, nay, a signal for the enemies of the Empire to swoop down and help themselves to the portion which they had already ear-marked; and worst of all a complete discord among the Mohammedan and Turkish subjects of the Caliph, a thing hitherto unknown in the annals of the Ottoman Empire; while in the case of the latter almost an entire loss of independence, and, still more valuable, peace. Last in the list of the victims of the borrowed Western Constitution comes China, who has only recently transformed her Government from one of the most ancient despotisms into a republic, a form of government never heard of in the East, and she holds her tale in reserve yet to relate."

Nevertheless, he thinks the feeling is running very high for democracy, even in Afghanistan. Democracy is the desire of those who have felt the oppressive hand of the strong central government, and here also there are "young Afghans" with ambitions.

"The old order in the recent years is changing with marvellous rapidity for the new and modern style in Afghanistan. It is no wonder that His Majesty Habibullah, who is as much inclined to modernization and reforms as his father was to consolidation, should feel disposed to remodel his system of government on modern lines. Then, of course, the serious problem of the choice of the system to be adopted will face him."

Aga Khan's Advice to Musalmans.

His Highness the Aga Khan has given some wholesome advice to the Indian Musalmans as to their attitude towards the Balkan War. He says that while it is undoubtedly the duty of Mohammedans in India to give their suffering co-religionists abroad all the help they need, they should refrain from embarrassing the Turkish statesmen with irresponsible advice. The men at the helm of affairs in Turkey are the persons best fitted to estimate the chances of success, and surely it is the height of unreason for Indian Mohammedans to urge from the safety of their positions in India a continuance of the struggle. It may be that, in the opinion of the Turkish statesmen, a prolongation of the conflict will not only be futile but even suicidal, and under the circumstances to urge a continuance will be an unspeakable enormity. Like a prescient statesman, he exhorts the Indian Musalmans to abstain from any course of action likely to cause embarrassment at the Turkish capital. Turkish statesmen ought surely to be credited with patriotism enough to discern whether the withdrawal of Turkey from Europe is imperative for her safety as an Asiatic power, and in any case Indian

Musalman may rest assured that the Sultan and his advisers will do nothing tending to the disruption of the Empire.

"For entreating his fellow Moslems to cease from tendering embarrassing advice to Turkish statesmen at this critical juncture in the history of Turkey, His Highness has come in for a good deal of undeserved criticism from a section of the Mohammedans of Calcutta. The Hon. Mr. Mazhuru'l Haqq, of Bankipore, declares that the views of the Aga Khan are not shared by any appreciable portion of the Moslem community. It may be so. It may be that his views are not palatable to a large number of them in their present frame of mind. But surely Mr. Haqq indulges in obvious exaggeration when he says that the Aga Khan's views are anti-Musalman. We join issue with Mr. Haqq on this point. The followers of Islam in this country are not so bereft of reason as to imagine that the Aga Khan, when he made these important pronouncements, was acting otherwise than as a patriotic Mohammedan, loyal to his co-religionists both in this country and abroad. To say that his advice is anti-Musalman is to say what is not a fact.

"The advice has been tendered in the best interests of the Turkish Empire, and Mr. Haqq may be sure that he is not less keen and sensitive to the honour of Islam than he and his followers.

"Again, when the Aga Khan thinks that Turkey should content herself by being an Asiatic power, he gives expression to a situation which has arisen in Europe as a result of the war. Mr. Haqq says it is difficult to believe that such an anti-Musalman (?) utterance should proceed from such an eminent Moslem leader. For our part we see nothing surprising or anti-Musalman in this utterance. The fact is, the Aga Khan is prepared to recognize the logic of facts, which evidently Mr. Haqq and those of his way of thinking are either unable or unwilling to do. It will be a hard wrench for Turkey to give up her European possessions and to become a purely Asiatic power; we can respect Mohammedan sentiment in their respect. But facts are stubborn things. Already Turkey has been deprived of province after province. The Balkan Allies are determined to end Turkey's rule in Europe, and in this determination they seem to have the moral sympathy and support of the Great Powers. Under the circumstances, the advice that Turkey should content herself with becoming a purely Asiatic power is the best that can be offered. Patriotism does not consist in continuing and prolonging a futile struggle, but in concluding peace on terms which will leave her free to develop into a strong and powerful Asiatic power, free from the turmoil of European complications. The Aga Khan's views, instead of evoking fierce resentment against him, ought to raise him in the estimation of Indian Moslems."—*The Comrade*.

A Turkish Cemetery.

Writing in the *Egyptian Mail*, Lady Jephson draws a picture of the contrast between a Moslem graveyard and a Christian cemetery in the vicinity of Constantinople, which is typical of conditions everywhere. It is the exception to find Moslem graves carefully kept. In most cases the dead are neglected, and the places where they are buried receive little attention or care: "We crossed an open triangular bit of ground, faintly suggestive of a village green, and found ourselves on the high road which leads to Haïdar Pasha. Here, before long, we came to the great Turkish cemetery, a sorry spectacle of neglected graves,

tombstones tumbling about in every direction, and gloomy cypresses. Neither grass nor flowers make beautiful the last resting-place of the dead. Slabs awry showed yawning holes below, and even coffins. Gravestones at all angles seemed as if an earthquake had disturbed them. Neglect, gloom, and even horror pervaded the place ; yet some children played merrily among the tombs. Good Mohammedans prefer to be buried in Asiatic rather than in European Turkey, since they are nearer Mecca, and they are laid to rest with their faces turned towards the Holy City. Men's tombstones are distinguished by the turban which surmounts them. A Turkish woman's only record of achievement lies in the number of bunches of grapes carved on her headstone, and answering to the number of children she has borne. No wall or fence enclosed this repellent spot, and we left it with feelings of deep depression.

"No more striking antithesis to this valley of gloom could be found than that of the Christian cemetery a little farther on. Here, with English oaks and elms to shade their graves, and emerald turf to cover them, lie our dead heroes of the Crimea. Beds as gay with flowers as the sward in Botticelli's 'Primavera,' tidy gravel walks and well-kept grass bear testimony to the loving labours of the old Crimean veteran who used to live at the gates and tend his comrades' graves. And how short were the lives of many of these ! Several were killed at nineteen, some even younger ! Behind the cemetery stands a yellow-washed barrack, once the famous hospital where Florence Nightingale and her staff of nurses worked so bravely."

The Zenana from a Hindu Standpoint.

In a recent number of *United India and the Native States*, a somewhat radical paper, a Hindu makes the following protest to his Moslem brethren regarding the evils of the Zenana and the only way it can be abolished. "In your latest issue, 'Free Lance' makes an earnest appeal to do away with the baneful Zenana system, which has been, though not the sole cause, at least one of the factors responsible for the backwardness of Musalmans not only in India but all the world over. Here I will consider the question in its bearing on the Indian Musalmans. With due deference to the writer, permit me to point out how futile such appeals are in the present state of the community. 'Free Lance' will admit that the majority of the Musalman population, nay, almost the whole, are dead against the idea of any relaxation in the custom. The few who have perceived its evil effects are mostly persons who have received English education. But those persons follow the custom because they are afraid of incurring the displeasure of the masses by breaking through it. I presume that the appeal of 'Free Lance' is made to English educated persons who are for abolishing the system and yet who have not the courage to do it. To hope that such appeals would inspire sufficient moral courage is, in my opinion, to hope against hope. The force of my statement will be properly appreciated only by those who realize the overwhelming strength of public opinion in favour of the present system. Even admitting that 'Free Lance' succeeds in his object for which there is not the remotest chance, and that if some two or three among thousands break through the system, no one, I am sure, would maintain that our community would be benefited to any appreciable degree. The only way of attaining the object in view is to change public opinion, and

that can only be done by the spread of English education. If English education is wisely disseminated the strength and opinion against the system would become greater, and it will be given the go-by. Hence instead of wasting time and frittering away energy in the advocacy of the abolition of a system by making appeals to people who can do nothing in the face of public opinion, 'Free Lance' would do well to direct his strength to strike the evil at its root. To say that Ameer Ali is right and another man is wrong will not alter public opinion a bit. English education is the only panacea for all the diseases the community is suffering from."

The Modern Sudan.

The splendid administrative work done by the British in the Sudan is so well summed up in a recent editorial which appeared in the *Near East*, that we share it with our readers. Whatever may be the policy of the Anglo-Egyptian Government regarding Islam, no one can help admiring the transformation of a region once cursed by the blood and fire rule of the Mahdi into a self-supporting, peaceful state, in so short a period of time. "There is a very old Arab tradition that 'when Allah made the Sudan He laughed.' This has always been cited as native corroboration of Gordon's opinion of the Sudan—'a useless possession.' The experience of the past fourteen years, however, certainly indicates that a wrong interpretation has been given to this local dictum. If Allah laughed when He made the Sudan, He must have done so at the prospect of the disappointment, not of men's hopes, but of men's fears, in regard to the Land of the Blacks; for of all the instances where initial pessimism has been set at naught and has been supplanted by an optimism by no means unduly buoyant, the million odd square miles of territory over which the British and Egyptian flags fly side by side constitute the most striking. When, in 1898, the Sudan was first reconquered, its revenue was but £E35,000, and the whole country had been reduced to such a state of chaos and desolation that the task of evolving some semblance of order appeared, if not hopeless, at any rate one which would take many long years to carry out, whilst the prospect of being able to draw up a Budget in any manner in proportion to the size and needs of the country seemed to be so remote that even the most optimistic were of opinion that for a very long time the financial support of Egypt would have to be sought to enable even the ordinary administrative expenditure to be met. Wonderful progress was made in the years following the re-occupation. The liberation of the people from the oppressive yoke of the Dervishes and the institution of justice and good order gave an impetus to the country which led those who were in any way connected with it to begin to remodel their views of the prospects on a more sanguine pattern. In his appendix to Lord Milner's 'England in Egypt,' the late Sir Eldon Gorst wrote: 'It cannot be doubted that, if the judicious policy of allowing the increasing receipts of the Sudan to be applied to Sudanese purposes and of granting considerable sums for capital expenditure in that country be continued, the deficit of the Sudan Budget will in a comparatively few years disappear.' Keen financier and profoundly versed in Egyptian and Sudanese affairs as the late British Agent was, he could not at that time (July, 1904) have foreseen that within a decade his prophecy would come true, and that the Sudan would stand emancipated from Egypt, in so far as the balancing of her annual

accounts would be concerned. When the late Sir Eldon Gorst penned those lines, the Sudan's revenue stood at £E463,000 and her expenditure greatly exceeded that figure, the deficit being met by a net subvention of £E196,000 from Egypt. To-day her revenue has trebled itself by comparison with that for 1903, and as from January 1 this year she renounces all financial assistance from Egypt in the adjustment of her annual Budget. Truly a wonderful achievement, of which Sir Reginald Wingate and his small but able staff of lieutenants may be justly proud!

"This transformation of a 'useless' territory, steeped in the depths of despondency as to the future, into a—so to speak—self-supporting State with immediate prospects of great potentiality in such an incredibly short period, is a triumph for the policy persevered in by the British and Egyptian Governments."

Missionary Occupation of Algeria.

Mr. J. H. Smeeton furnishes us with the following statistics taken from the latest Government Census:—

"The total population of Algeria is 6,006,000; of these 747,000 are Europeans, 1,052,000 Berbers, Kabyles and other natives, and 3,207,000 Arabs. There are 22 towns with a population of over 10,000; 164 with populations between 5,000 and 10,000; 1,161 between 1,000 and 5,000; 287 between 500 and 1,000, and 500 hamlets under 500. Missionaries to the Arabs are situated in only nine centres, as follows: Algiers, Blida, Boná, Bougie, Cherchelle, Constantine, Miliana, Rolizane and Tebessa, leaving 2,030 centres of population, with their 3,112,000 Arabs, unoccupied, and in the towns where the missionaries are stationed, the Arab population barely touched, especially the men."

The Moslem Press of Tunis.

The progress of civilization in Moslem lands and the penetration of Western ideas can often be measured in terms of the Moslem press. It is interesting to know that there is a revival in this respect also in Tunis. The only daily published in the country is called *Éz Zoharah*, edited by Abdur Rahman es Sanaldali. The Young Tunis party, which corresponds to the Young Turkish party or the Nationalist party in Egypt, have an organ of their own called *Et Tunisie*. This publishes a French edition, as well as the Arabic, entitled *Le Tunisien*. Other papers are the *Hadhiri*, *El Liwa*, *Ed Dhahak* (a humorous paper, as the title indicates), *The Murshid*, *El Umma*, and *Es Sawwab*. Extracts from these papers appear in the *Revue du Monde Musulman*.

Up-to-Date Advertising.

The disintegration of Islam and the attempt to adjust itself to modern progress is evident also in their newspaper advertising. Not only does the Moslem press of India freely advertize lotteries, banks, sometimes even beer breweries and brands of liquor—which are all of them *haram* according to Moslem tradition, but they are beginning to use Christmas cards for their feast days and cheque-books on the Bank of Faith, with good wishes. These advertisements recently appeared in Indian Moslem papers:—

JUST OUT! JUST OUT!!

‘ID GREETING CARDS.

In English and Urdu; nicely printed, 32 varieties in a packet.

Price, As. 8 a packet.

THE MUSLIM BANK CHEQUE BOOK.

novelty of the age, artistically printed, contains 8 imitation cheques.

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With the Arabi Texts and their correct translation in English and Urdu. The most important feature of this book is that it contains a valuable introduction dealing on scientific truths on Namaz. The sayings of our Prophet, the reputed excellences of the holy Qur'an and many other interesting subjects have been added in the appendices of this book.

Pp. 132.

Price, As. 6 a copy.

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Any one writing verses or Rhymes either in English or Urdu for the Id greetings suited to Father, Mother, brother, friends wife and children will be awarded with one watch for each verse.

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Jai-Namaz just imported from Egypt, very pretty in design, Re. 1 8 0 each.

REAL SILVER KALIMA RING, As 8 each.

REAL SILVER CHAHARYARI LOCKET, with the engravings of Kalima, &c., Re. 14.

MINIATURE KORAN, weighing $\frac{1}{2}$ a tola, Rs. 2.

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LADIES VEIL (BURQA)

Latest invention, quite up to date

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Most comfortable and easy wearing

SEVERAL AWARDS

Approved by H.H. The Begum Sahiba of Bhopal,

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I have to-day received the Burqa you have sent me. I am exceedingly glad to have it. It is quite a new thing in this part of the country. It is of the best pattern and will be most comfortable and will fully serve the purpose for which it is made. Hoping the Burqa will be appreciated by the Mohammedan public.

Yours Sincerely,

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The Raymund Lull Home.

At Tangier, Morocco, is a home for orphan and neglected Moslem boys. It was named after Raymund Lull, the first Christian missionary and martyr to Mohammedans. It is not in connection with any established missionary society, but is entirely dependent upon the freewill offerings of God's children.

In 1903 one small boy most persistently sought shelter in the private home of the missionary. His very persistence led the mis-

sionary to enquire of the Lord if He were opening a fresh branch of service for him, and finally to admit the boy. From this nucleus the Home has developed, through various stages, until at present there are thirty-three boys comfortably housed on a property three miles from the town, leased seven years ago from the North Africa Mission. The boys are given an elementary education in Arabic, the Bible being the only text-book for reading. English has recently been introduced as one of the subjects. Several of the boys have professed conversion, which, of course, is *the* object of the Home. Some former boys are holding very good situations. Five of the present number are learning printing. It is a remarkable fact that in this—one of the most fanatical of Mohammedan countries—the natives of their own free will bring their children to the Home. Truly it is in answer to prayer, and only thus are they kept and fed and clothed. God is faithful.

H. P. ELSON.

Tangier, Morocco.