



DAUGHTERS
OF SYRIA

THE LIFE AND HISTORY OF MRS. ELIZABETH BOWEN THOMPSON



MRS. ELIZABETH BOWEN THOMPSON

TO
MARY, COUNTESS OF ABERDEEN,
WHOSE FRIENDSHIP AND SYMPATHY
CHEERED THE BELOVED SISTER IN HER MISSION
AMONG THE DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA,
THIS BRIEF SKETCH IS BY HER PERMISSION
DEDICATED
BY HER SINCERELY OBLIGED

SUSETTE H. SMITH

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1 *PAGE 7*

Personal Recollections of Mrs. James Bowen Thompson,
Previous to Her Entrance on Syrian Mission Work – by Her Sister

CHAPTER 2 *PAGE 35*

Story of the Massacres of 1860, by the Editor

CHAPTER 3 *PAGE 49*

Commencement of Mrs. Bowen Thompson's Work in Beirut. Unfolding of Her Plans, 1860

CHAPTER 4 *PAGE 65*

Early Development of the Work in 1861. Access to Turkish Ladies

CHAPTER 5 *PAGE 89*

Progress in 1862. Visit of the Prince of Wales. Mrs. Thompson's Visit to Damascus

CHAPTER 6 *PAGE 99*

Advance in 1863. Additional Schools at Beirut. Founding of School at Hasbeya. Bible-Women

CHAPTER 7 *PAGE 121*

Growth in 1864. Visit of Miss Whately. Editor's Impressions.

CHAPTER 8 *PAGE 131*

Results in 1865 and 1866. Visit to England. Fruits of Hareem Visiting.
New Schools at Mokhtara and Other Places.

CHAPTER 9 *PAGE 143*

The Work of 1867. New Fields. Ain Zahalteh. Visit to the Pasha. Petitions from Damascus.
Thirst for Education.

CHAPTER 10 *PAGE 165*

Progress of the Work in Beirut in 1868-9. Schools, Normal Training, Elementary,
Infant, Moslem, Boys, Blind, Cripples, Various Suburban.

CHAPTER 11 *PAGE 189*

Rapid Progress in 1868-9 of Schools at Damascus, Zachleh, Hasbeya, Ain Zahalteh.
Visits to Damascus and Constantinople.

CHAPTER 12 *PAGE 217*

Events of 1869-70. Advance of the Work, Especially Among the Moslem Women.
Invitation to the Hauran. Petition from the Druses. Illness of Mrs. Bowen Thompson.
Return to England. Rapid Decline. Peace in Departing. A Wail from Syria

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA

INTRODUCTION

The Life of Mrs. Bowen Thompson can best be read in her labours of love. In her works which survive her it can be said of her in a sense more true than of most, - "She being dead, yet speaketh." Her life was her work and her work was her life. It has been so for many previous years, but emphatically was this the mark and stamp of her last ten years on earth; of which these letters treat.

The Syrian Mission work can never be thoroughly comprehended in its difficulties, its progress and its rapid success, through the wondrous outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon it, except by those who have known the country, the people and the work and have a practical acquaintance with the bitter and fanatical prejudices of Mohammedans on all that relates to the training of their daughters: and the fact that a lone English lady, who single-handed commenced in 1860 a work entirely new, amidst the ruins and devastation of a civil war of extermination, left behind her after nine

INTRODUCTION

years twenty-three firmly established schools, containing about 1,700 pupils under fifty-six teachers, is enough to arrest attention. What was the key of her success? Firm consistency and a single eye. She had but one object - to bring souls to Christ. Her aim was far higher than the desire to promote secular or intellectual improvement. From the determination to make known the Word of God, she never flinched. Even among the Moslems she resisted every inducement to leave that Word behind. Access to Mohammedan women was offered in many unexpected quarters, if she would but surrender the teaching of the Bible. With a consistency that contrasts with the cowardice of many nominal Christians at home, she firmly refused. As the Pasha, after he had failed in persuading her to compromise, approvingly remarked - "You cannot drive a straight furrow without a straight eye."

As to the origin and details of the Mission, the simple and graphic letters of Mrs. Bowen Thompson stand in need of no comment from an Editor. Alone they fully explain the development and progress of the great Mission-work she was permitted to inaugurate and, as we trust, not only to inaugurate, but to build on those firm and durable foundations which shall present an impregnable advance-post for the recovery of the East to the Cross and for the maintenance of clearer light and purer gospel truth among the ignorant and superstitious Christians of Syria.

I have been requested by the nearest surviving relative of Mrs. Bowen Thompson to make such a selection of her letters as might narrate in her own words the story of the great Mission-work to which the last ten years of her life were devoted. Had I been requested to do more, I should have shrunk from the task, conscious of my inability to do justice to her marvellous labours. But her correspondence was so copious, so animated and so full of detail that an Editor's work has been simply to select from abundant material what would most concisely present a continuous narrative. As an eye-witness of her work

INTRODUCTION

and having had the great advantage of her friendship, I have esteemed it indeed an honour to be entrusted with this charge; and I trust it may prove a blessing to others, as it has been a privilege to myself, to trace the growth of the Syrian schools from their first commencement in faith and prayer in the day of small things, through a long course of indomitable energy, undaunted courage, marvellous tact, devoted self-denial and single-hearted benevolence, with varied trials and successes, to the close of the earthly labours of their foundress. Where is the great work, blessed of God for the good of others, which has not required self-sacrifice, patience and many struggles?

And is not the woman who, for the honour of Christ, whom she had long known by blessed experience as her Saviour; and for the love of the souls of her untaught sisters, sacrificed all the pleasures and enjoyments of home, of a large circle of devoted friends, - in short, of civilized life and Christian communion; who, when already past the meridian of life, chose such an object as her calling and life-work; who pursued it with unflinching courage in the face of difficulties and half-hearted support; who never tired, never looked back, - is not she worthy to be had in honour, worthy to be remembered in the front rank of Christian heroines who for the love of Christ counted not their life dear to them?

Surely it is a duty we owe to that Saviour, who implanted His grace in her, who endued her with His own Spirit and sent her forth in the footsteps of those faithful women who followed Him from Galilee, that she might win back to the knowledge and love of Him the daughters of His own land, - to set forth her work and labour of love and make it stand before the world to glorify God in her; with the hope and prayer that He, in whose hands are the hearts of all, may raise up many more to follow in her path, to be willing to render a life-service as a loving and living sacrifice for the salvation of the children of the East, to the glory of their Saviour.

INTRODUCTION

May the lamp of life which she was permitted to rekindle on the long-darkened mountains of Lebanon continue to spread its light further and further and to grow brighter and brighter, till the gloom of Islamism be dispelled and the shades of a corrupted Christianity be illumined by the true light; till "the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose;" till "it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing;" till "the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it;" till the prophecy be fulfilled, that "the glory of Lebanon shall come unto Thee." How long, O Lord? how long? "Is it not but a very little while and Lebanon shall be turned into a 'fruitful field?'" And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book and the eyes of the blind shall "see out of obscurity and out of darkness."*

H. B. T. GREATHAM VICARAGE, March 6th, 1871

* See description of blind schools at Beirut and Damascus.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF MRS. JAMES BOWEN THOMPSON,
PREVIOUS TO HER ENTRANCE ON SYRIAN MISSION WORK.
BY HER SISTER.

*“My name and my place and my tomb all forgotten,
The brief race of time well and patiently run,
So let me pass away, peacefully, silently,
Only remembered by what I have done.*

*Needs there the praise of the love-written record,
The name and the epitaph graven on stone?
The things we have lived for, let them be our story,
We ourselves but remembered by what we have done.”*

BONAR

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA
CHAPTER 1

A DESIRE has been expressed for some early details illustrative of the character of my beloved sister, to introduce the history of her Syrian Mission work.

The request is encountered by a twofold difficulty. In the first place, it is left to unaided memory to gather up such fragments all family records and correspondence having been destroyed by the fire which consumed our brother's mansion at East Coombe, only two months after she quitted it for Syria.

In the next place, the verses at the head of this introduction literally express not only the wishes, but even the injunctions, of my dear sister. Public as much of her life had been, she ever shrank from publicity; and the same feeling which prompted the remark on her deathbed, when praising God for bringing her to England, to be laid in our quiet graveyard, 'I never wished to die in Syria, because I knew they would make some grand funeral' - and again, 'that her schools might not be put into mourning,'

REMINISCENCES OF CHILDHOOD

as suggested by a friend, also prompted the request that there might be *no memoir* and *no epitaph*. Truly her family can desire no better memorial than her own noble work in Syria, consecrated by the encomium of the virtuous woman in Proverbs 31.

*'Strength and honour are her clothing;
And she shall rejoice in time to come.'*

Yet the plea that some such details are due to the *cause* for which she lived and died and which has already wrought such a mighty change in the social position of the women of Syria, has been deemed a sufficient apology for the following brief sketch.

There was an early maturity in her physical and intellectual powers; and the love of God, as it dawned in the first years of childhood, was especially manifested in the exercise of a strong and simple faith. Her innate consciousness of power, fostered by a certain reliance on the family motto, 'Dare and persevere,' was by the teaching of the Holy Spirit brought into subjection to the mind of God and enabled her with St. Paul to add - 'I can do all things through Christ who strengthened me.'

I never knew her otherwise than religiously inclined and she was sometimes taunted with being a little saint; she would then seat herself in a sunny window and unbidden, commit to memory large portions of Scripture and the Prayer-book. When quite a child, while playing in the garden, she was decoyed by a woman under some fair promise. Her loss occasioned much anxiety; and when brought home, stripped of the pretty dress that probably tempted her capture, she replied to the enquiry whether she had been much frightened 'I did cry, but I was not frightened; I knew God would take care of me.'

YOUTHFUL TRAITS

Yet in her early girlhood she evinced a certain degree of timorousness, possibly induced by her love of fairy legends and tales of bandits, with which our foreign attendant riveted the little, ones around the nursery fire till they were too horrorstricken to leave it, yet so fascinated as to entreat they might be told them once again. Thus she would, even beyond her childish years, start up in the night and arouse her sleeping sister with the half-stifled assurance that she heard robbers at some door or window. No remonstrances would quiet her; laying hold of some weapon of defence, the trembling girls would proceed, candle in hand, in their search, sustaining their courage by repeating aloud one or more verses of a well-known hymn:

*My steadfast heart shall fear no ill;
For Thou, O Lord, art with me still.'*

Her natural enthusiasm was early fostered by ancestral traditions, as narrated in 'Lloyd's History of Wales,' and the romantic stories of our father's Highland grandmother, who, in devotion to the Pretender, allowed herself to be arrested in his stead, sustaining this character for several days. Our father, too, had visited Germany during the French conquests and the recital of battles and sieges and providential escapes, inspired Elizabeth with an ardent love of enterprise.

But beyond all others the wonderful narratives in the Bible riveted both her heart and mind and turned her yearnings towards the scenes of those stupendous miracles.

The story of Deborah was the favourite of the nursery. Elizabeth was considered the beau-ideal of the prophetess; and whenever any girlish achievement was to be undertaken, her sisters greeted her with the cry 'Awake, awake, Deborah.'

EASTWARD ASPIRATIONS

The history of Joseph was a special attraction and this was further increased by hearing our father explain the history of the Rosetta stone, which had been discovered by his cousin, Henry Salt, the British Consul in Egypt. In our girlish plans we at once settled to study the hieroglyphics, find our way to Egypt and there unravel the mystic lore of the pyramids. Meanwhile, to visit the British Museum and gaze on this very stone, was the most charming of holidays; and the perusal of Champollion and Belzoni, Von Hammer and De Sacy, the most fascinating of our studies.

Thus the East became the cynosure of our latent aspirations, which were matured by the opportunities for meeting travellers of note. This may be regarded as her first preparatory lesson in the school of God's Providence, fitting her for her future service in the East; for truly -

*'There is a providence that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them how we may.'*

While such associations tended to form her literary culture, her growing, deepening love and knowledge of the Word of God determined the bias of her affections and she early began to write little works of a religious character and illustrative of Biblical history. She delighted in 'Greswell's Harmony,' and, true to her practical instinct, at once resolved to simplify his chronological arrangement into a narrative suited for her Bible-classes. Her heart was among children and she thought and wrote for them, bringing all the powers of her mind to the level of their capacities. Hence the extreme simplicity of her style, which was ever the same, whether inditing a letter to one of the little ones, or writing an official despatch to an ambassador or pasha. Hers was a ready pen; but she thought so correctly that she rarely altered a word, or, indeed, read over what she had written.

Her letters were listened to with the utmost delight and passed from hand to hand.

She was of an eminently suggestive and practical turn of mind, combined with great organizing and administrative powers, a quick military eye, which enable or at a glance to arrange and foresee the result of her plans and as a Quaker gentleman, who beheld her in the midst of her Syrian Mission, remarked, 'Thy sister is a great general.' She inherited the talents of her grandfather, General Lloyd and like him was a thorough tactician. Everything she undertook, though apparently done on the spur of the moment, was the result of design and fitted into the place she intended; whether in the first rough sketch for her work among the widows and orphans of Syria, or the piece by piece additions to her now noble institution at Beirut, all was begun, continued and ended in prayer; and amid the greatest trials and perplexities she saw and felt her way, because it was founded upon and subordinate to, the Word of God.

And no sooner thought than done; while others were losing opportunities in endless ponderings and procrastinations, she was already at work. Her favourite motto was, 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;' and the closing remark of the last Syrian report she drew up was, 'Let no time be lost; ours may be but a brief working-day!' In fact, nothing impressed the leisurely Oriental more than this promptitude; one of whom, intending to pay her the highest compliment, exclaimed, 'Madame, you are as quick in seizing opportunities as a Frenchman is in catching fleas!' It was this, too, which so impressed the great administrator of the Lebanon, Daoud Pasha. After a very painful misunderstanding, His Excellency proposed that he should escort her in state from his palace, where she was on a visit, attended by a *cortége* of soldiers, sumptermules and tents, 'in order,' as he said, 'to show to the natives of the Lebanon the honour

in which he held her.'

Her object was to find a school-house in a mountain village. One suitable, but wretchedly dirty, was selected and the Pasha promised to come back in three days. No one could be found to undertake the task of cleansing and so, tucking up her dress, with broom in hand and tubs of whitewash prepared, she encouraged the lady teachers, who accompanied her, to follow her example; and when the Pasha returned, he found all beautifully neat, arranged with desks, benches and tables covered with books and stores of needlework and some dozen happy children seated on their forms. 'This is administration, this is work,' exclaimed the astonished Pasha; and from thenceforth he became the warm supporter of her schools. 'Mrs. Thompson, had I known you before as I do now, no difference would ever have occurred. From this time let our correspondence be direct.'

Prayer and strong faith in its power, was the hidden source of her energy in action. I recollect an instance in the case of a young friend a few years older than herself; who, soon after her marriage to a clergyman, sent her an urgent invitation. Instead of the happy home she had been led to expect, she found it the scene of great distress. The extravagances of his college life had now come upon him and obliged him to flee, leaving his young wife near her first confinement and the bailiff in possession of his property. Deeply overcome and having no means to relieve her Elizabeth proposed they should kneel down and ask God to show them what they must do. She felt greatly strengthened and a new light seemed to bid her write to a lady in the same county and lay before her the case of her young friend, naming the day and hour to which, at her intercession, the humane officer had put of the execution. The morning came; the postman was eagerly questioned, but no letters. Alas! what was to be done? Yet her faith failed not. At one moment in her chamber upon her knees, the next hurrying to the officer to entreat him

ANSWER TO PRAYER

to wait a little longer, for help was coming. The last hour had struck; the two friends were at prayer and heard the preparations for the fatal move. At the same instant a messenger on horseback came riding up the avenue, bearing the welcome relief, with an apology for the delay, occasioned by absence from home.

She had a true concern for all who she felt were not living unto the Lord; and on one occasion resorted to an artless *ruse* to bring the subject before a gentleman who did not show much interest in religion. She asked him to let her repeat the hymn she had just been learning,

*'O Lord, turn not Thy face from me,
Who lie in woful state,
Lamenting all my sinful life,
Before Thy mercy gate.'*

'That is very pretty; but, my dear child, this is not meant for a good little girl like you; but for bad wicked men, great sinners, such as thieves and murderers.' 'But I *feel* it is quite true of me,' was her simple, unanswerable reply.

We had formed a close acquaintance with some young friends, of whose Unitarian principles we were not aware. The discovery gave us much pain, but it led to the careful study of the Bible and of works upon that subject, especially 'Dwight's Theology.'

There was another dear and aged friend brought up under the withering influence of Unitarianism, who engaged our deepest sympathy. He had been for many years the subject of prayer.

During a severe illness we requested a clergyman to visit him and the blessed result was communicated by Elizabeth in the following letter:

"While this subject is yet fresh on my mind, I must sit down and tell

POWER OF THE WORD

you as briefly as I can of a conversation I have just had with dear [], for which I am sure you will thank our God afresh. I was alone with him and leading the conversation to the visit of the Rev. Mr. C he said, wish you had heard him; he was so solemn; he read portions of St. John's Gospel; I never heard them so before; they were messages of marvellous love and exquisite tenderness. 'Yes,' he added, after he had recovered from his emotion, every word of the Saviour is full of love and marvellous tenderness. He came into the world that none might perish. What love! What tenderness!' I observed that when the Jews rebuked Christ for eating with publicans and sinners, He remarked that the express purpose of His coming was to save sinners. 'It is a wonderful mystery,' said he, but we must take it as it stands; we must believe it.' He then spoke of the simplicity of faith in God's word and I gave some instances of its immediate effect, such as the healing of the nobleman's son, when the fever left him at the very hour in which Jesus said, "Thy son liveth." 'Yes,' he replied, it is a wonderful mystery, as we say in the creed, 'Who for us men and our salvation came down from heaven. For us men.' I observed that none of us could save ourselves. 'Impossible' he said. I then contrasted the pardon that Jesus gives to all that come to Him, with the forgiveness of man - that Jesus blots out our transgressions and remembers our sins no more; that He casts them into the depths of the sea; that at the latter day they shall be sought for and not found, for His love has cancelled them all. The dear old man covered his face with his hands. 'Yes,' he said, 'all that come to Him, He will in no wise cast out.'

"After a pause I said that the little hymn 'At evening-time it shall be light,' had been much upon my mind. And upon mine also,' said he I read it today; I will read it to you now.' He sat down and read the text at the head, from Zech. 16. That is what God says; the passage is from the Bible. Here he was so much affected that the nurse wished him not to read, for she was fearful

LETTERS ON A REPRIEVE

of ill consequences and so was I; but he said, 'It is very short.' He read it most emphatically and paused solemnly on the last line, 'At evening-time it shall be light.' 'Yes,' he added, 'there is light.' I replied, 'Indeed there is light and we have cause to bless God for it; but now come and rest yourself a while.' He at once, went and sat down in his arm-chair. I cannot give you the conversation as fully as I would desire, but I know this is enough to bring you in thankful adoration upon your knees. God has heard our prayer and given us the sweet assurance that our dear friend looks to Jesus with confidence of acceptance."

"ELIZABETH"

Another friend has sent some letters from our dear sister, of which the following extracts illustrate, not only her practical energy, but also the spiritual application which she gave to the occurrences of every-day life:

"EAST COOMBE, 1859.

"We have had some marvellous answers to prayers within the last fortnight. I had a letter from a friend at Aldershot, relative to a poor woman, the day she heard that her husband was condemned to death. She was in a most piteous condition. We were asked to make a small collection to enable her to go to Winchester to take leave of her husband the day before his execution, which was fixed for the 27th of September. The letter stated that the sergeant had murdered a woman in a fit of drunkenness and mentioned that he had received a wound in the head in the Crimea, which had caused the doctor to caution him never to drink, but that no mention of this had been made on the trial. After laying the case before God in prayer, we thought it worth the effort to lay it also before the Secretary of the Home Department. Mr. Mott and I went up to the Home Office. I was listened

to and requested to commit the petition to paper, in order that it might have every consideration. We had an anxious watching time and called more than once; and at last, the day before that fixed for the execution, we received the joyful intelligence that a reprieve from the Queen was now on its way and must reach the man in the course of an hour. Thus the sentence of death had been removed; though the man knew it not, yet it was as sure as if he knew it, only he had not the peace and comfort of it. We instantly despatched a telegram to the poor wife, who by that time had returned from her last interview with her husband, as she supposed.

"A gentleman observed, 'What a relief it will be to them to learn that the sentence of death has been taken away!' I replied, 'And yet we are all under sentence of death; but few comparatively seem to care to know for certain that they are no longer under sentence of death.' He replied, "The thing is impossible to know in *this* life." I showed from Scripture that it was not only possible, but that it was the duty of every believer to take God at His word. Romans 8. I made a great impression on him and he ended by saying he would to God he could know that his sins were pardoned and that there was no condemnation for him.

"How clearly this illustrates that the fact of our justification may be deemed too good, too wonderful to be really true as regards our own selves! it might be for some who were better than we, but not for such sinful beings. Like poor Sergeant H, we in our prison cell lie wavering between hope of life and fear of death, inactive, depressed and powerless - but let the door open, the messenger come in with his letter, the word 'Reprieve' printed in unmistakable characters! O why wait to have passed through the gate of death before we *will* believe!"

Again she writes to the same friend, Jan. 17:

"I have seen marvellous changes within the last fortnight and the fields

are rapidly whitening for the harvest.

“The 3rd of January was a day of holy solemnity and joy to my soul. While reading and praying with a young sergeant, the husband of one of my mothers’ 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 inquirers since. Oh, I have seen many men in the last two weeks under a deep concern for their souls.

“Yesterday, at my mothers’ class in Greenwich, there was great earnestness; and during our reading I was sent for by the master of the ragged school to come and pray with the children. About sixty of them stayed after breaking up, in deep concern; I went in and found these children weeping like those who could not be comforted. I repeated a few texts of Scripture, feeling utterly powerless as these little ones came round me seeking comfort. Not a word was spoken and all was calm; but I felt it right not to encourage outward manifestation in the children and after praying and conversing individually with them, we dismissed them. I quite hope this is the beginning of a real work of the Spirit; but oh, what judgment and divine teaching are needed lest we lead any astray!”

Her steadfastness of purpose, the natural self-reliance and self-sacrifice, which formed the real basis of her character, were chastened by the most tender spirit of sympathy and a sort of instinctive clinging to others for a response to the yearnings of her own soul and for their concurrence in carrying out her plans of active benevolence. She realized her position as

INNER CHARACTER

only one among the many members of the body, so that, however conscious of her own individuality and power, she felt the need of the hand or foot - enlisting the co-operation of the weakest and least honourable, yet giving to each her own place. She shrank from standing alone and this laid the foundation for that close communion of soul, that reciprocal dependence, as of warp and woof, which formed the intimate bond of friendship and union between herself and even the most seeming discordant characters.

Another quality was her inborn kindness, which under religious culture became her ruling principle in thought, word and deed.

A friend of many years standing writes: "Indeed, so entire was her sympathy with all classes with whom she came in contact, that she shared the friendship of the highest, while securing the confidence of the lowest ranks; and with her intuitive perception of the capability of those around her, drew them forth with loving encouragement and directed them to the highest aim - the glory of God."

All knew that, she would carry her point, whatever it might be; but so entire was the confidence in her judgment, that even the reluctant yielded assent.

Perhaps the feature which first impressed a stranger was her undisguised sincerity and truthfulness. You at once felt that she not only understood you, but her frankness enlisted your confidence. Many is the heart which first unbosomed to her its trials and from her learned to lay on Jesus its burdens and its cares. Among the many friends who have been asked to give their impression of her character, a frequent remark has been, She was the first person who asked me to kneel down in mutual prayer and that in a most easy and natural manner.

One friend writes, "I first met her abroad. I was in a state of great perplexity, with no opportunity of consulting any one. She happened to call and though ignorant of my trial, proposed that we should pray together. God

had evidently prepared her heart what to ask; and light, direction, comfort, came while I was yet praying and to this day I feel how much I owe to the decision I was then led to form."

Another very dear friend writes: "My first introduction to her was at Hatfield and I was prepared to admire and respect her from the terms in which my friend had spoken of her talents and labours. She fascinated and interested me at once by her powers of detail and her particularly attractive manner. I loved to listen to her. After my marriage I visited her and her excellent family and was always struck with the conversation there. It was of no ordinary character. It was the outpouring of highly cultivated minds, refined and beautified by Christian principle. There was no space for a desire of mere worldly talk and yet the liveliest interest taken in all subjects of general or literary importance. I was particularly struck with the readiness of Elizabeth to devote time and energy to any work of God brought before her, even when compelled to give many hours daily and even nightly to various literary engagements. She always found time for friendly intercourse and for God's work and never seemed pressed for time. Truly her motto might be, 'A mind at leisure from itself.' Hers was a singularly calm mind and her sweet and even temperament must have assisted her in bearing burdens and doing work which even strong men would have felt too much.

"I love to dwell upon her character. There was an energy in it, a oneness and simplicity of purpose, which commanded respect. I never remember an inconsistent word or act of hers, never an unkind or unchristian one. Even in her last visit here, when she told me privately of the heavy, cruel trial which she had with one who, instead of proving a help, had turned out a hindrance in the work, she spoke of the individual without the least bitterness or anger. She is gone where many whom she loved awaited and welcomed her; and deeply as we shall always deplore her loss at a time of life when we might

have expected a lengthening of tranquillity, I shall not be supposed guilty of flattery to the living when I say that I am convinced her mind was calmed and supported in leaving her wonderful work by knowing that she left it in the hands she did - not only one of the sisterhood, but the happy band of three."

She was never idle, but, as her friends used to say, knew how to *manufacture* time. There was something suggestive and purpose like in her varied acquisition of knowledge, a power of assimilation which enabled her to make use of the most unlikely agencies; indeed, she could turn her hand to anything and rather enjoyed difficulties, as affording scope for ingenuity and invention. Thus she contrived in making something out of nothing, to furnish up her large empty schoolhouses, converting boxes into cupboards and coverings into curtains - so that some, judging only by the appearance, even fancied her extravagant.

This inventive faculty she inherited from our wise and practical mother, the very personification of Schiller's '*zuchtige Hausfrau*,' who delighted above all things in making her girls useful; and was wont to enforce her maxims by displaying the wonderful specimens of needlework done under the eye of her own mother, who, rather than suffer her children to be idle, cut holes in their pinafores to be neatly darned.

From our father she inherited a love for poetry and a clear retentive memory both of persons and events, readily learning by heart the whole of Goldsmith's 'Traveller and Deserted Village,' large portions of the Essay on Man, Gray and Milton. He carefully directed the studies of his daughters and would not sanction the reading of a novel till after the age of sixteen - a crisis ardently longed for, when the much-coveted 'Ivanhoe' was to be ours.

At an age when other girls are still in the schoolroom she laid hold of passing incidents, not merely as a topic of interest, but as a call to personal

EFFORTS FOR NEGROES

effort. Take for an instance the steps by which she was led to identify herself with the cause of negro education. An invalid friend of the family, who often had the young people to spend a few days, one morning received a visit from a lady connected with the West Indies, who read aloud some letters she had just received from a friend who took great interest in the negro children on her estate. Shortly afterwards the subject was discussed in our presence by the late Mrs. Denman and other benevolent ladies who were anxious to do something for the young slave children, but they really knew of no opening for schools, as the planters were opposed to education. We ventured the remark that we had heard of some ladies who took an interest in these little outcasts. A few days after Lady Brodie called and asked us to procure the letters; with these in our hands and hearts full of sympathy for the little slaves, we were invited to spend a morning with Mrs. Samuel Hoare, at Hampstead. I shall never forget our interview; it was the dayspring of that new and better life which was fostered for many years under the guiding hand and heart of this noble woman. The calm dignity and graceful bearing which distinguish the 'Friends' of her own gifted family was chastened by the most winning sweetness, while the silvery tones of her voice spoke in the meekness of wisdom. With motherly kindness she encouraged the timid girls to write to the lady in Antigua - a correspondence which resulted in the formation of the Ladies' Society for the Early Education of the Negro Children, of which the sisters for many years held the privileged post of joint secretaries and which still continues its silent but most blessed work among the young in our West Indian colonies. Much training was indeed needed to form head and hand to such duties; but our kind and faithful friend was no less ready to encourage than she was to correct a fault and would sometimes check an outburst of enthusiasm by the remark, 'My dear Elizabeth, thee dost need equanimity.'

VISIT TO SCOTLAND

A new and glorious light now brightened and intensified her inner life - the life hid with Christ - and she realized as she had never done before the power of His resurrection. She was visiting among friends in Scotland at the period of a great revival and her strong faith and comprehensive mind enabled her at once to grasp in all its power and fulness the blessed assurance of a present salvation - the blotting out of transgression and adoption into the family of God - truths full of sanctifying comfort which she ever clung to and which became as a brook in the way through this dark and thirsty vale. She never lost the peace and comfort she then received. At the same time the great hope of the Church - the blessed truth of the Saviour's second personal advent, arose as the guiding star to draw her still more closely to the 'pleasant land' where His feet shall stand upon the Mount of Olives. This led her to take a more direct and special interest in the House of Israel and in these labours of love she received the blessing promised to them that pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Again the Lord was advancing her one step onward in that school of Providence which was to culminate in her personal service among the daughters of Syria.

At the instance of sonic friends she joined the Syro-Egyptian Committee, formed under the presidency of the late Sir Culling Eardley. This was ollowed by her marriage with Dr. James Bowen Thompson, who had for several years devoted his great professional talents to the Syrian mission and had opened and personally conducted the British Syrian hospital at Damascus, from 1843 to 1848. They resided in London for some time, till Dr. Thompson's plan for opening a direct railway communications to India by the Euphrates valley called him to Constantinople, whence they proceeded to Syria and settled at Suediah, near Antioch where he possessed some property. Here Elizabeth was initiated into the language and manners of the East; and here her full heart yarned over the darkness and degradation of the women.

EFFORTS IN ANTIOCH

She once began a school in her own house, extending her efforts beyond the confines of Antioch to the neighbouring districts of Kesab and Aintab, where she formed little knots of readers of the Word of God. In reference to her residence in this ancient city we extract the following remarks by her attached friend, Mrs. Ranyard, the noble founder of the Bible-woman's Mission, a true fellow-worker in the Syrian cause:

“It is pleasant to think that our beloved friend, Mrs. Bowen Thompson, began her Bible work in Bible lands in the city of Antioch, the first cradle of the Christian name.

“Let us look back to one morning in June, 1855 when she and her husband were leaving that city, having there abode eighteen months. Many are gathering round their path, to bid them farewell; among them, some little children who have been their pupils during their stay. The lady mounts her horse to thread slowly the narrow streets and many a hand is stretched forth to press hers for the last time! salaams resound and ‘Come back, come back soon,’ is heard from old and young.

“The travellers leave behind them a Christian native teacher and some Armenian converts, who have always assembled at their house for prayer and worship on the Lord's Day. These come to say farewell and to hope their friends will not forget them and their work when far away; Mohammedans, Jews and even Romanists, join in the adieu, ‘sorrowing to see their face no more.’

“One of these travellers, Dr. Bowen Thompson, soon after went home to the land where there are no farewells. The other, spared fifteen years, for a great work among the women of Syria, thus describes their departure from Antioch's City gate:

“We thought of St. Paul's departure; and when we remembered his work in this very city, we felt how very little we had done and how much there was

to do. However, I believe, our leaving for a time, strange as it may seem, has given a stimulus to the people. Many on whom we had urged the necessity of learning to read the Word of God, begged for the books which before they had despised as 'Protestant;' and, during the last fortnight, I taught the alphabet and the contents of a little Arabic and Armenian spelling-book to more persons than I had done during the previous twelve months; and one and all of these are determined to persevere in learning to read.

"To a clerk in a silk factory we had last year given an Arabic Bible, which he tells us has been ever since his constant companion; and we know that that Bible is read to all who will listen to it. With this clerk some Greek boys are now reading the Bible daily. The population near the factory is Armenian and we have agreed to pay a clever lad 300 piastres (about £3 2s. 6d.) a year to teach them to read and many are anxious to embrace the opportunity.

At Bitias, a delightful mountain village, four hours' journey from Antioch, famed for its pure air and water, a number of children are now learning to read: their parents were willing to send them 'if we did not make Protestants of them.' We said our object was *to teach them to read the Scriptures in their own language* (the modern Armenian); and they replied, 'Of this they should be glad.' A teacher has now been sent from Aintab to Bitias and the number of persons who can read the Scriptures is increased to forty; the little boys who followed us when we last visited this village, called out can 'I say *oip, pen, kim*, (ie. a, b, c); I go to school.' and the old people are learning from the children.

"We think it would be a good plan to secure one or two clever boys in every Armenian village, who, for 300 piastres a year, would teach at least thirty persons to read. They would require a supply of spelling-books, to be followed speedily by the New Testament and the whole Bible; but for these the people must apply to England. Teachers will be sent among them from the American seminary at Bebek. This may take place in the course of

ROMANIST SCHEMES

another twelvemonth; they would then find the people anxious to learn and they would be spared the drudgery of teaching them the first rudiments.

It had been announced in the public papers, in the month of April, 1855, that the Church of Rome was about to make an effort for the re-establishment of the Ancient Patriarchate in Antioch; after which several of the superior clergy traversed the country to forward the design. They took the best house in Aleppo for a nunnery and there likewise projected a hospital and a school. At Antioch they selected a site for a church; and an archbishop arrived from Beirut to assist the French Consul in the ceremony of laying the first stone. In conversation, the following plans were further developed:

“I am satisfied,” said the speaker, that there is not a more promising field for us than this. We shall commence with *general* schools, open to all, not national, or Catholic, but simply to teach the young. I have heard of Italian and Jewish families already, who would send three or four; that is enough to ground my plan upon. With our people at home, therefore, the thing is settled. Now for the next point. The town wants draining; I will draw up a prospectus and will induce the Austrian Government, the Messageries Nationales and Lloyd’s and other companies, to take shares. I shall simply buy land for this purpose and then go to England for subscriptions. We buy the land merely to drain. We must observe secrecy and not alarm the Government. The workmen must have houses to dwell in; and we will by degrees get out a colony of clever persons, who will instruct the people in agriculture and gardening; and so, little by little, we shall get a church, a school and a college. Then our work will soon extend over the country. This is my plan, Madame.’

“The person addressed, replied, ‘I hope you will teach the Scriptures!’ He answered in great astonishment; and drawing his cocked hat from beneath his flowing robes, ‘Madame, je suis prêtre.’ He had not known that Madame

ANTIOCH

was 'anglaise.'

"Mrs. Thompson thus continues:

"I feel confident that if we do not teach the people, the Roman Catholics will.

"While resident here, I have had a very large class of girls and young women - Turkish, Jewish and Armenian at the same time - who came to me to learn sewing and embroidery and have taught them the Arabic alphabet; and some of the Turkish girls, who can read a little, have begun the second chapter of Matthew. I have visited several hareems lately: I always take my work and the ladies cluster round me and begin to work also. I believe I have inspired some of them with a desire to learn to read and to know what is in the Bible.

"We feel anxious for the progress of the small schools under native teachers, in the villages surrounding Antioch. The whole expense of hiring a room, salary of the master and a meal of barley for the ragged and hungry children who come from a distance, will, I am told, be covered by £10 a year. Little rewards for the children are a very welcome gift. - E. M. T.'

"We like to go back to these first efforts of our dear friend, because they are an epitome of all she afterwards accomplished for the bereaved widows and orphans of the Lebanon. We have recently heard from her sister that the clerk to whom, as above, Mrs. Thompson gave the Arabic Bible and also taught him to read English, became the first Protestant in Antioch and was employed by the American Mission; and it is singular that, on the very day the telegram arrived in Syria to announce Mrs. Thompson's death, this man arrived in Beirut, bringing with him his three daughters, asking that they should be trained as Christian teachers for their native city."

Dr. and Mrs. Thompson continued to reside at Antioch till the breaking out of the war in the Crimea, when the extreme need of medical

aid was strongly urged upon Dr. Thompson as a call for personal service among the sick and wounded, for which his long residence in the East and his acquaintance with the treatment of its diseases, so peculiarly qualified him. His friends at home feeling the importance of enlisting his services, had meantime applied to Lord Panmure for an official appointment which should confer on him military rank; but before it could reach him, he was already on his way to the relief of the sufferers. On his arrival at Balaclava, in the beginning of July, he had several consultations with the military staff; but almost immediately succumbed to the raging malignant fever and was put on board the steamer which was ordered to convey invalids to the military hospital at Scutari. Here the rigid trammels of military regulations forbade his admission, as being a civilian, unless by special permission; but before even the attempt could be made and after hours of agonizing suspense, the ship was ordered off to Kulalee and the prostrate, panting invalid and his broken-hearted wife found themselves left alone on board the close, fever-stricken steamer. We must draw a veil over her unutterable anguish; but she afterwards poured out her sorrows into the womanly bosom of her queen; not in selfish or resentful grief, but to secure for other sufferers the boon which had been denied to her. We subjoin an extract from this letter, to which Her Majesty replied with a most gracious tenderness, assuring her that measures should at once be taken to carry out Dr. Thompson's dying request, that a discretionary power might be vested in the hands of the receiving officer of her Majesty's naval and military hospitals to admit urgent cases like his own, as long as there was a spare bed in the wards:

“Your Majesty. We were left alone; his spirits sank from that hour and he wept with grief and weakness. We anchored off Kulalee. Oh! your Majesty, what a night of suffering followed! and at six in the morning he lost both speech and consciousness and became as one that is dead. I knew not

how to act. I prayed to God to direct me. I had his head shaved and blisters applied and to my joy he once more revived. He again said, 'My only chance of life is to get me ashore.' At this moment a messenger of mercy came to his relief, your Majesty, it was a woman, it was the Lady Alicia Blackwood, from Scutari, who, with her husband, the Rev. Dr. Blackwood, no sooner heard of Dr. Thompson's state than they did their utmost to get him admitted. Her ladyship had ridden over in that early hour of the morning. The physician came on board, sent a nurse and restoratives and made arrangements for his admission into the hospital. As the men bore him up the hill-side, he exclaimed, 'This is life. I have some hope now.' And as they laid him down on the bed in the ward, he said, 'This is paradise,' and taking the doctor by the hand, 'Let me speak plainly, Doctor: Never shut your doors against any suffering fellow-creature; for many a valuable life may otherwise be sacrificed.'"

On the 30th of July, Mrs. Thompson wrote: "James has all he can wish for and so have I; we are also well looked after by the nuns. The reverend mother is a very superior woman, Sister Joseph Mary, an affectionate, kind-hearted creature. Indeed, we have reason to see the hand of God in bringing us to this hospital. Doctors, nurses, diet, changes, luxuries, fresh air, cleanliness, calm, regularity, all combined with the utmost interest in his recovery."

August 1st - "Help me to praise my God for His wondrous mercy. I know not where to begin. It is a long tale, but I must at once bring you to where the Lord has brought us this lovely evening, the 1st of August. Well, my darling is restored to me and his noble mind relieved from the awful pressure. He is not yet out of danger, still there is every favourable symptom and if he has no relapse, all may yet be well. His bodily sufferings are extreme, for the slough of the fever is passing off through sores and boils; these he says are his safety

valves. The doctors are a little apprehensive unless he gets sleep, which he has not done for thirty-six hours. His will be a most lingering recovery if he get over Saturday, the crisis of the fever.”

Sunday, August 5th - "All is over. James has left me alone. He would willingly have taken me with him and oh, how gladly would I have gone! But he had to go alone and yet he was not alone, his Saviour was with him. Up to Thursday all seemed to be going on well; but I had my fears, in spite of all the medical men said to the contrary. I was with him night and day and he loved to have me in his sight. Tonight, at seven o'clock, he is to be laid in his grave.”

August 9th - "Every respect has been paid to his memory and they have honoured his remains beyond even those of one of their own staff who died some time ago. I was very ill, but told the medical man that I longed to be with James to the very last and meet the body at the grave. He said he would name it to the Staff and thought if I felt at all equal; it might really do me good. I made every effort to rouse myself. At four o'clock Dr. Guy sent to say all was ready in the ward, if I wished to pay my farewell visit. I went there. He lay in his simple black coffin without a name or ornament. I knelt down by his side and had a comforting half-hour. I felt so sweetly that my loved one's spirit was hovering around me, glad that I was once more with him and could cleave to him to the last. I asked God to give me some comforting word to cheer me in my lonely path through this world's trials and sorrows; and after waiting and listening a while, there came to me with great power and comfort this assurance, 'the God of the widow; I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' I rose from my knees greatly strengthened and then walked with the nurse, who accompanied me to the graveyard. It is a large place, on a rising ground, where some thousands of our poor soldiers and one of the ladies lie side by side. His grave was seven feet deep, under a spreading tree 'commanding a fine view of the Bosphorus and Constantinople. I returned home and as I

FUNERAL

put on my weeds, a strange feeling came over me. I thought of the morning when I put on my bridal attire to meet him to lead me to the altar and now I put on my best black and widow's cap and bonnet with a calmness as though I were going to meet him in joy, to see him safe to the gates of glory. I was just ready when kind Lady Alicia came, deeply affected and full of sympathy. Her husband could not come to the funeral, being lame and it would take more than two hours by caïque. Well, at a quarter to seven, Sister Ann and I left the Home for the burial ground, where we found some of the ladies and nurses - and at seven we saw the military procession coming down from the upper hospital, bearing his precious remains, attended by soldiers and followed by the medical staff in full uniform and several sorrowing friends. We met them at the entrance and I fell into the ranks, close to the dear body, as chief mourner. I was led to the head of the grave and listened to the glorious Resurrection Service and as they lowered his precious remains I bade them a solemn and silent farewell, in sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life."

She returned to England and found a congenial and happy home with her sister and brother-in-law, to whom she was deeply attached, at their beautiful residence, East Coombe Park. Here many plans of personal usefulness were set on foot.

Among many others, the Indian mutiny originated in her hand the same practical results. She and several members of her family joined the committee formed by the Lady Mayoress at the Mansion House and at once suggested the sending out of ready-made articles of clothing, mourning and widows' apparel. Large cases were regularly despatched by the P.O. steamers to meet the sufferers, one such ample case, filled with complete suits of widow's attire, met the ladies returning from Lucknow and many afterwards expressed their gratitude for this unexpected boon.

WORK DURING INDIAN MUTINY

Meetings in aid of the sufferers, presided over by Lord Shaftesbury, were inaugurated at East Coombe, Charlton and the neighbourhood divided into districts. This led to further efforts on behalf of the soldiers despatched from Woolwich, prayer-meetings and addresses, distribution of Bibles and Testaments. Touching letters were afterwards received from some of the men; and one, who had been a reckless husband, became a missionary reader among his companions on the voyage. Here again one effort was a step to another. The destitute case of the wives and children left behind at Woolwich was a claim too strong to be overlooked. Meetings were held, in which the lamented Captain Trotter and that noble friend of the soldier, Miss Marsh, took a warm part. The officers' ladies formed a visiting committee, for furnishing employment and making under-clothing for the Government stores; and when this was arranged, Mrs. Thompson further secured from the Government for each child a small additional allowance. Upon this, aided by Mrs. Angerstein, she started the Central Association for soldiers' wives, under the patronage of the Queen and the first public meeting was presided over by the Duke of Cambridge, who heartily thanked the ladies and placed the Wellington Barracks at their service for a large bazaar.

Step by step had she learnt obedience by the things which she suffered, till the Great Teacher had prepared her by the culminating agony and experience of Balaclava and Kulalee to become the sympathising friend of the widow. As the Physician's widow, she now entered upon her last term of education in the school of God's providence. This to all her previous training was the needful complement, ere she could prove a capable and sympathising teacher of husbandless isolation and bereavement. She had now her commission from God. She now heard, as it were, His voice calling for some tried and pitying hand to pour into the wounded spirit the balm of a Saviour's love, to hush the widow's sobs and the wail of orphans clinging

SYRIAN MASSACRE

to her knee. The occasion for the application of all her past experience now immediately occurred.'

In 1860 the shrieks from Syria rang over Europe and the wail arose from the desolate widows and orphans. Lebanon and Damascus had been deluged with Christian blood, the watchword had gone forth to slay 'every male from seven to seventy,' while the wretched survivors fled for refuge to Beirut and other seaport towns. Their cry pierced her heart. Plans were at once set on foot and meetings inaugurated for aiding the Syrian Temporal Relief Fund in sending out stores and clothing; but her plans and aspirations far outstripped these limited alleviations which were restricted to the relief of temporal distress and left the poor wounded heart in its utter blackness of despair.

Her knowledge of the East at once discerned the only true remedy - the Word of God, with all its quickening and consoling power. She saw plainly before her the facility which these very disasters presented for placing it in the hands of the natives and especially of the women, who were now removed from the bondage of their ignorant and jealous priesthood. She became very thoughtful; we noticed she was occupied with some great plan; we divined its object; and, under a deep conviction that it was a call from God, resolved not to throw any hindrances in her way.

At length she opened her heart, saying the Lord had strongly impressed upon her that He had a work for her in Syria and she had cried out in obedience to that call, 'Here I am; send me!' And so when we found her thus ready, we could in our hearts only say, 'The will of the Lord be done!' Her preparations were hastened, so as to enable her to start by the next steamer. But a sudden attack of illness confined her to her bed; then, too, a faithful servant who had lived with her at Antioch was unable to accompany her. Many looked upon these as providential intimations, warning her to give up her resolve

to adventure herself in the midst of danger; but nothing could shake either her faith or her determination. What mean you to weep and break my heart? I feel assured that it is Satan who is seeking to hinder me. 'I must go.' She rose from her bed to join the party of dear Christian friends who met to commend her in prayer and on the morning fixed, for her departure she was still confined to her room. However, she rallied, assured she should feel equal to the journey to Marseilles, whither she was accompanied by her brother-in-law and sisters. Again a fresh disappointment awaited her successively at the departure of the train both at London, Paris and Marseilles, where she hoped to find a lady who had agreed to travel with her. But nothing could shake her resolution; she embarked without friend or companion, realizing that the more she was destitute of human aid, the more entirely could she rely upon the providing care of her God and Saviour.

On her arrival at Beirut, in October, 1860, she found all creeds and nationalities engaged in endeavouring to alleviate the sufferings of the thousands of widows and orphans. Her mission was to bind up the broken-hearted by the consolations of the Gospel; but this very remedy was dreaded as likely to bring, not peace, but a sword and she was seriously advised to return to Europe by the next steamer, rather than add to the difficulties which beset those who administered the temporal relief. But she had counted the cost; she had received and accepted her mission as from the Lord and this sustained her under this first discouragement, which was speedily followed by another, an attack of rheumatic fever; but so far from being dismayed, she regarded it as a merciful recess in which to mature her plans and in all these antagonistic things was made 'more than conqueror through Him that loved us.' Her patient suffering enlisted general sympathy and many volunteered to help her. Lord Dufferin and his noble-minded mother were most kind and the missionaries and other residents showed much sympathy. At length she

ARRIVAL AT BEIRUT

was enabled to walk upon crutches along the corridors of the hotel, watching the crowds of widows tearing their hair and beating their breasts. This only served to urge her endeavours to find a home where she could personally minister to their sufferings. A house was pointed out; crippled as she was, she mounted her donkey and with a heart overflowing with gratitude, took possession of the Beit Ayoub Beg. In her effort to dedicate the house and the work to God, her feet and ankle bones received strength and she was for the first time enabled to kneel in prayer. Here we may leave her to tell her own wondrous tale, as detailed in the following extracts from her correspondence.

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA
CHAPTER 2

BEFORE entering upon Mrs. Bowen Thompson's mission work, it may be well to recapitulate shortly the dread tale of massacre and rapine which in 1860 desolated the fairest province of Syria and caused a shudder to pass through the whole civilized world.

In the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges, containing a population not far short of half a million, the Mohammedan inhabitants are few in number, excepting in the seaports on the coast.

No part of the Turkish Empire could compare with the Lebanon in industry, wealth and high cultivation. Man had successfully set himself to conquer nature. Every nook of ground in the rugged valleys that could be forced to yield to human labour had been carefully brought under the spade of the husbandman. Secure in the mountains from the desolating inroads of Bedouin raiders, the population had increased till its density was without a parallel in Syria and Asia Minor and had devoted itself to the arts of peace,

MARONITES

especially to the culture of the silkworm.

The mass of the inhabitants are either Druses or Maronites. The latter hold the northern portion of the range in almost exclusive possession. They are descendants of the ancient Syrians. They number about 200,000 and are by far the most numerous class in the Lebanon. They are so called from Aaron, a hermit, who lived in the fifth century. Being condemned by the general Council of Constantinople as holding the Monothelite heresy, his followers were expelled from the towns of Syria and took refuge in the mountains of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. They recognize the Romish supremacy and constitute a very influential political sect. They celebrate the Mass in Syriac, of which the greater part of the people do not comprehend a word. They have many churches, convents and schools, but the lower orders are in a state of great ignorance and poverty. The Maronites are very bigoted and intolerant and, like the Jesuits and other Communion, have a more intense hatred towards their fellow-Christians than even towards the Mohammedans.

The Druses occupy the southern ranges of Lebanon, with a few outlying villages, some even as far south as Cannel. But while there are no Druses mingled with the centre of the Maronite population, the Christians were often found in small communities in Bruce towns, iving side by side with the others and in several instances were the predominant race in large villages and towns. Unless when stirred up by Turkish machinations on the one side, or Jesuit intrigue on the other, the two races have lived in an armed truce, if not ill harmony, for centuries.

The creed of the Druses has long been a mystery to orientalists, though now pretty well ascertained. The sect was originated by a Persian, Hamm, about A.D. 1030, but its real founder was the Khalif Hakim, who ruled in Egypt at the end of the tenth century. He was a monster of most blood-thirsty



MAP OF NORTH SYRIA

DRUSES

type and licentious life, but withal a dreamy fanatic. At length he set himself up as inspired and finally as an incarnation of the Godhead. The first crusade was inaugurated in consequence of his atrocities perpetrated on Christian pilgrims. He was assassinated outside the city of Cairo, but his followers gave out that he had been translated and would return again from heaven. Hamza proclaimed Hakim as the God Incarnate and himself as his inspired prophet. Derazy and others of his followers fled to the Lebanon and there preached this new faith, which never took root in Egypt. The people of this part of Syria had never adopted heartily the creed of Mohammed and were easily induced to listen to this new impostor. They do not reject the Koran, but explain the whole of its language and laws as symbolical and mystical. Nothing is to be taken in a literal sense, but there is a hidden meaning known only to the Okkal, or initiated. These are bound to secrecy by the most awful oaths and likewise swear implicit obedience to their religious chief in all matters. They gratified their sensual fancy by adopting the old Persian notion of the transmigration of souls, which was incorporated into this travesty of Islamism and Christianity.

The Druses constitute, if not the most numerous, certainly the most brave and warlike, body of men in Syria. Everything connected with this singular race is calculated to excite curiosity and interest - their manners and customs, their military bearing, persistence of character and, above all, the mystery that has so long enveloped their moral history, which has only begun to be penetrated within the last few years. Even to this day, though some of their religious books have found their way into Europe, it is not easy to speak precisely of their doctrines. The image of a calf is said to be an object of their adoration and the bronze figure of that animal, which had once been a Druse household god, was in the possession of one of our consuls. They are divided into two classes - the initiated, or Okkals and the Djahels, or

uninitiated, which latter, of course, comprehends the greater number, who seem exempted from any kind of worship or religious rite. The Druses occupy the southern portion of Lebanon, the western slopes of Anti-Lebanon, Safed, Mount Hermon, the Hauran and the giant cities of Bashan. In the Lebanon there are thirty-seven large towns and villages, inhabited solely by Druses and 211 villages of Druses mingled with Christians. In Anti-Lebanon there are sixty-nine Druse villages or towns and several others having a mixed population of Druses, Marmites and Schismatic Greeks. The Druse capitals are Bachlin in the Lebanon, Hasbeya and Rasheya in Anti-Lebanon, which are held sacred by them, as Jerusalem was by the Jews.

It is not difficult to account for the zeal of the Turks in their recent endeavours to revive the old Mohammedan antipathies. Pride of race and of religion are alike inimical to the doctrines of religious toleration which the European powers are pressing on their adoption. They regard with impatience the status which the once crouching, submissive rajahs have been lately acquiring in their dominions and anticipate that their practical admission to common rights and privileges with themselves will, if slowly, yet surely, conduce to that elevation which superior intelligence, industry and activity, invariably secure to themselves. They observe them exhibiting an almost daring confidence, hopeful, innovating and ambitious; and knowing that their growing power is derived rather from external circumstances than from their native powers of combination, they dread them in proportion as they see them aided by the religious sympathies and political favour of foreign nations.

It was therefore to be expected that the Turks would seek, by every available means, to check the progress of parties thus aided and stimulated and to evade the fulfilment of any concessions or promises that might have been extorted from them, in their favour, by their Christian allies.

MUTUAL JEALOUSIES

For the last fifteen years the Christians had also been suffering every possible oppression from the Druses. A Christian could hardly call his life his own and general pity was felt for them throughout the mountain region. Whereas the Mohammedans generally sheltered their own intended attacks on the Christians by a careful circulation of reports that they were in immediate expectation of being attacked by them. The same policy was adopted by the fanatic Druses, who denounced Christian aggression with a vehemence increasing with the approach of the time for endeavouring to utterly root out the remaining vestiges of strength on the part of the scattered Christians of the Lebanon.

The policy of Eastern rule has doubtless been similar to that formerly adopted by the popes who fomented international quarrels in the hope that neither party might acquire a predominant power in Europe; but, by mutually weakening each other, strengthen the influence of the ruling and mediating power.

The mutual jealousies of religious parties inhabiting the same country are always stronger than their international disputes and no surprise can be felt that such animosities existing amongst the thickly peopled country of the Lebanon and having been fomented by external influence, should, after smouldering for fifteen years, break out in such a form as we find detailed in the history of the fearful massacres of 1860; nor that the ruling power should have been found, if nominally on the side of order, arrayed in fact on that of the victorious party.

With the detailed accounts of the Mutual aggressions and manoeuvres of contending parties and of the slaughter, the desolation and misery of that time, many names are connected of persons high in power. Of these some have passed to another tribunal than that of man's judgment and others having identified themselves since with measures of a more pacificatory

VILLAGES BURNT

nature, come not within the scope of severe stricture in a work like the present, the happy object of which is to record the blessings which have been, in the mercy of God, made to spring from the sad ruin caused by those scenes of violence and in thankfulness for the present and in hope for the future, we may look forward to the day when the children and grandchildren of the murderers and of their victims may learn side by side that gospel of good will and to honour that Prince of peace, who alone maketh wars to cease in all the world.

Opinions vary as to the responsibility resting upon the various parties engaged in the warfare in the Lebanon in being the first to strike the blow. The short and tragic tale of massacre and bloodshed shows us Christian villages a mass of smoking ruins, their fathers and sons slaughtered, while their destitute and bereaved women fled in thousands towards the seaport towns, where many perished from fatigue, famine, hardship and the remainder scarcely cared to preserve the scathed lives which the hand of desolation had made wretched, while the opposing mountain tribes pursued their victorious way over the plains, where every day's march was signalized by the fires and the slaughter, the recital of which includes horrors too painful for transcription.

The villages in the neighbourhood of Beirut, named Baaba and Hamel, were the first of the Christian settlements to suffer, after various engagements during three days previous to the 30th of May. The able-bodied men having been withdrawn from their positions, the flames were kindled; and from the burning villages rushed in precipitation men, women and children, the feeble among them being cut down in the pursuit and the soldiers robbing and plundering every woman they could secure. The same night, hundreds of Christians fleeing for safety to the mountains were suddenly attacked near Beirut and cut to pieces, neither woman nor child being spared. Around Beirut, the gardens became thronged from hour to hour with fugitive

crowds, in the last stage of destitution and exhaustion, lying under the trees, bleeding, naked and dying, to whom, in many cases, the charitable zeal of European residents and even of some respectable Mohammedans, could only administer the last kind offices of humanity. But a short time elapsed and Deir el Kamar was made the scene of a similar outburst. Forces from the Hauran had joined those in the Lebanon and, one after another, the towns and villages inhabited by the Greek and Maronite Christians of the plain were given over to fire and sword, the men slaughtered and the women and children forced to fly.

At Deir el Kamar, famine was the first evil that threatened the inhabitants. Unsuspectingly they had dwelt at ease and even refused an invitation from their brethren to rise in the common defence. Suddenly towards the end of May they were surprised by finding their town in a state of blockade, the roads intercepted and outposts meeting them at every turn. Their harvest had been reaped and carried away and they had not three days' provision in the town. Against a force of 4,000 men, who on the 1st of June poured into the devoted town, the Christians maintained a stout defence until sunset.

The district of Jezeen was the next to suffer. It is a village beautifully situated among broken rocks, with a stream of water flowing through it, bordered by sycamores. The access to it is by a slippery road on one side and on the other by passes among rocks so rugged as to be almost impassable for cattle. It was comparatively easy to surprise this secluded village; two thousand men, shouting their war songs, rushed upon it and overwhelmed it like an avalanche. Women and children fled in consternation and the whole population rushed down the nearest ravine, leaving the village, already in flames, behind them. Twelve hundred men were massacred in the hot pursuit within two miles. Many took shelter and remained in a state of starvation for days, in the caves and holes in the rocks. A number found their way to Sidon,

HASBEYA

where shelter was refused by the Mohammedan population and no less than three hundred were butchered on the sea shore and the younger women and girls hurried off by the Mohammedan *Metualés*.

Convents were attacked, several monks were slaughtered, men turned out into the fields and plunder taken, amounting in one case to £80,000. Sidon itself was saved by the opportune arrival of H.M.S. *Firefly* on the 3rd of June. Divided counsels among the Christians prevented any effective aid being brought to the victims; and the mob leaders among the Maronites, though repeatedly urging the inhabitants of the peaceful villages to rise in their own defence, abstained throughout from rendering them any real assistance.

Sunday, the 3rd of June, was a no less fatal day in the Anti-Lebanon. Of that region the principal towns are Hasbeya and Rasheya, the former the seat of the local government by the Druse Emir and the latter that of a noble relative of the same family, ruling his little neighbourhood under the Pasha of Beirut. The population of these towns was principally - Christian, Maronite, or Greek; and on these shortly fell the horrors that had been enacted elsewhere.

Hasbeya stands on the banks of a glen dividing a ridge falling from one side of Mount Hermon and forming an amphitheatre enclosed on three sides. Its hills are terraced and highly cultivated to their summit, producing in abundance fig trees, vines and olives. The seraglio or palace of the Emir stands on the spur of a lower ridge and the principal part of the town clusters round it. The open court of this seraglio was the scene of the fearful massacre enacted at Hasbeya on that fatal 3rd of June, when the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, having been induced by some forewarnings of danger to come into the town during the last week in May, were located in the quadrangle of the seraglio, trusting to the promises of

support and friendship of the Turkish governor then resident there. Here treachery succeeded treachery and the helpless Christians, under orders in the first place to go out and defend themselves against the approaching army and in the next place compelled by the same authorities to an unconditional surrender, having given up their arms and resumed their peaceful labours, they were again attacked and retired for safety to the quadrangle, where the authorities swore to defend them with their lives. Here, as in a living tomb, they waited, in starvation and misery, the result of negotiations, rendered the more tantalizing by the arrival of an escort of Christians to Karoon, sent to conduct them in safety to Damascus. Their rejoicings in hope of this manner of deliverance were short; the trumpet sounded, the soldiers stood to their arms, the gates of the seraglio were thrown open and the Christians, who were preparing for their departure and dispersed through the corridors, were driven into the great central court. After a few minutes the slaughter began. The first victim was the confidential secretary of the Ernie Saide deen, seized and cut up piecemeal, beginning with his fingers and toes. Many had noses, ears and lips cut off and were otherwise horribly mutilated before, the final blow was given. Shrieking mothers, in vain endeavouring to cover and conceal their boys and screen them from the sword, shared their fate, perishing together in a grasp that the sword alone could dissever.

Scarce a groan arose from the martyr throng of men. Each, as his turn came, calmly submitted his body to the stroke and fervently muttered, 'In Thy name, Lord Jesus.'

Similar scenes were being enacted at the same time at Kanaken and at Rasheya, where seven hundred victims were betrayed, robbed and slaughtered, as at Hasbeya, in the court of the seraglio, where not only all the Christians, but the Mohammedan Emir who had befriended them, were slaughtered; and the victorious troops, being joined by fresh forces from

the Hauran, hastened on to threaten Zachleh and the already humbled Deir el Kamar, while the Maronite forces stood aloof from their suffering fellow-Christians at a distance of only a few miles and while the garrisons of Hasbeya and Rasheya repaired to Damascus, where they openly sold in the bazaars the plunder they had carried off church vessels, embroidered robes, watches, jewellery and shawls.

On every side now was daily to be seen the smoke of burning and ransacked villages. Men were slaughtered on the spot, the women plundered and dismissed. Even in the distant plains of Baalbec, Christians were being hunted down like wild beasts and, at the end of three weeks from the commencement of the raid, Zachleh, the stronghold of the Christians, was made an easy prey.

No village in the Lebanon seems to enjoy in greater profusion the gifts of nature than Zachleh, with its population of nearly 10,000; and the careful terracing and cultivation of the hills that surround it, clothed with vines, show what returns are obtained by careful industry from the soil in that happy climate. Now that it is the sphere of one of the most prosperous of Mrs. Thompson's branch schools in the Lebanon; we may look to the time when the mutual jealousies, turbulence and superstition which have been said to characterize it may yield to the gentler dictates of a more enlightened Christianity.

After the fall of Zachleh, that of Deir el Kamar speedily followed. The story of Hasbeya was repeated here. The Christians appealed to the soldiery for protection, as their enemies were pouring into the town by hundreds and by thousands. They were told that, though there was no cause for alarm, they had better bring all their valuables to the seraglio, where they would remain untouched till order was restored. Forthwith streamed in men, women and children, carrying, as they believed to a place of safety, their treasures,

clothes, jewels and a booty which the troops subsequently divided among themselves. Shortly commenced the slaughter in the town; every Christian was shot or cut clown as soon as seen. The priests, rushing to their churches, were slain at the foot of the altar and others killed on the pavement.

The massacre of the twelve hundred fugitives who with their families were sheltered in the seraglio speedily followed. The women being ordered to fall back, the separation of husbands, wives, mothers and sons was hastened by the sword and soon the blows given by hatchets and axes, sounded like those of woodcutters felling the trees of a forest.

Six hours completed the work and filled the gutters and the water-spouts with human blood, which rose above the ankles. Beneath the flashing swords of the murderers, the trembling women, with tears running down their cheeks, voices choked with sobs, hair dishevelled and dress dabbling in blood, were compelled to exclaim, 'Long live our victorious lord.'

Two thousand women and children were on the following day dismissed from Deir el Kamar in the direction of the sea coast, between Beirut and Sidon, with a letter to the English Consul-General, informing him of the fact and requesting him to send boats to take them away. The embarkation of the wretched beings was at length accomplished, by the great exertions of Commanders West and Lambert, of H.M.S. Jannet and Mohawk. They were landed eventually at Beirut.

But, by the end of June, line-of-battle ships, frigates, corvettes, from all nations came dropping in and steamers cruised about the coast. The English and French squadrons, under Admirals Martin and Jehennes, took up stations off Beirut in July and finally the French military expedition landed on the 16th of August. With the French on land and the British flag floating in sight of the coast, the Christians again breathed and fugitives returned, but not before the numbers to be reckoned among the slain amounted to eleven

FUGITIVES AT SIDON

thousand, leaving twenty thousand desolate widows and orphans. Not less than four thousand Christians perished from destitution, three thousand habitations were burned to the ground and two millions sterling of property destroyed.

A mixed commission of the European powers, in which England was represented by Lord Dufferin, extended its labours over a period of five months, endeavouring to restore the scattered Christians to their homes, rebuild their ruined houses, fix the amount of the indemnity to be paid and generally to reorganize the government of the Lebanon on a basis which might afford to its inhabitants that peace, order and security which they had vainly sought for twenty years.

The sufferings of the wretched outcasts escaped from these awful massacres were such that they seemed to have been spared by the sword only to be devoured by the slow torture of starvation. Their emaciated forms thronged the outskirts of Beirut and Sidon and seemed to be fulfilling the savage threat of the Druses, that they 'had been spared that their hearts might bleed.'

Soon, however, the charitable contributions of European countries flowed in, chiefly from France and England, as well as from America and an Anglo-American Committee was formed for the management of the funds, the Turkish authorities also contributing their modicum; but had not Lord Dufferin generously advanced a loan of £5,000 from his private purse, the funds would have failed entirely in the month of November and the daily rations been altogether stopped.

It was at this juncture, when benevolent exertions for the temporal relief of the victims of these brutalities were at their highest, that Mrs. Thompson conceived and executed the design of going forth alone on a mission of Christian comfort and instruction to the widows and orphans crowding

AID FROM EUROPE

around Beirut. Her efforts and gradual success in elevating their position is best recorded in her own letters.

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA
CHAPTER 3

“IN compliance with your request, I will endeavour to give you a brief account of some of the leading facts connected with the establishment of the British Syrian Schools in Beirut though I regret that it will compel me to speak of myself and to restrict my remarks to my own more immediate work.

“You will remember the sanguinary massacres which decimated the male population of the Lebanon and Damascus in 1860. Suffice it to say, the Mohammedans and Druses made common cause for the destruction of the Christian population, whose bitter enmity often provoked a strife.

The Maronites and Greeks of the Lebanon, who fled for refuge to their Mohammedan rulers, were betrayed and the men delivered up to the sword. The order at Hasbeya was ‘every male from seven to seventy’ should be slain.

“Thus thousands upon thousands were butchered; those who escaped to Damascus were in a few weeks also cut down by the Turks, Druses and Kourds; their houses were rifled and burnt and their widows and orphans

BEGINNING OF THE WORK

abandoned to all the horrors of flight. Stained with the gore of their husbands and sons, the sound of the murderer's sword still ringing in their ears, crowds of these helpless widows and children fled distractedly, they knew not whither; some to Tyre and Sidon, but the greater part to Beirut, the seaport towns of Syria. When tidings of these fearful events reached Europe, England sent large contributions in money, food and clothing. Many of my friends and the members of my family took an active part in organizing various sources of relief; and as it had pleased God that during the Crimean war I should be one of the many who suffered bereavement, it was but natural that my heart should respond to the widow's cry. Then, too, the happy portion of my married life which I had spent in Syria had enabled me to acquire some knowledge of the language, as well as of the ignorance and degradation of the women. Therefore, as a widow caring for the widow, I felt specially called upon to try and alleviate their distress and make known to them the only balm for a broken heart - the love of Jesus.

"With God for my refuge and strength, I left England in October, 1860, resolved to help these widows and orphans during the next six or eight months. On my arrival in Beirut, I found a sad confirmation of the harrowing accounts which had reached us, thousands of women and children plunged in helpless despair, my first effort was to meet with suitable premises for an Industrial Refuge and it pleased God to provide these and to direct me to Christian natives, who had been under the instruction of the American missionaries. I commenced in December with thirty women and sixteen children and in a week we had above two hundred under our care. Though none were admitted without tickets, yet the gates were besieged by applicants clamouring for admission, saying, 'Even if you cannot pay us for our work, only let us come and sit and Listen; for our hearts are sad and we have nothing to do.' At this juncture I received not only liberal aid, but cheering intelligence

that my friends in England had formed themselves into an association, called "The Society for the Social and Religious Improvement of Syrian Females." And now, in reviewing the result of our five years' efforts to raise the neglected women of Syria, we can truly thank God and take courage. At first my heart often died within me at the squalor, noise and misery of these people.

Ignorance of thin truth and deeply cherished revenge, characterized the greater number of the women. Even the families of priests would say, 'We are like the cows, we know nothing.' When, however, their Christian teachers unfolded to them the Bible, they would sit at their feet in rapt attention, exclaiming, 'We never heard such words!' Does it mean for us women?' 'Now we will always sit here;' while some few, who had been under the teaching of the American missionaries, blessed God for this privilege of learning to read His Word. Women as well as children had to commence with the alphabet; but such was their avidity to learn the daily text and portion of hymn taught by dictation, that in a short time the Bible was in their hands and the voice of psalmody rose to heaven, instead of their former imprecations and idle talk. Groups of women being taught by their children, often met the eye; and in their miserable abodes, as well as at school, the Bible was read and the teaching of the Holy Spirit sought in prayer, while many now attended the Sunday-school and the public worship of the American missionaries."

As a manifesto to the women of Syria of Mrs. Thompson's aims, a letter, numerously signed by Christian English ladies and printed in Arabic, was largely circulated in Syria:

"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 ears; 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 Beirut, in aid of the Syrian Relief Committee - one of our number; is gone forth to visit you and many earnest prayers from earnest hearts have followed her on her way. We are sure you will receive her as a friend and love her as a sister.

LETTERS FROM ENGLISH LADIES

“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 your sympathising friends.”

SYDNEY MANCHESTER	H. GRAIN E.
SUSAN CAROLINE CHOLMONDELEY	EMILY S. G. SAUNDERS
MARY J. KINNAIRD	HANNAH BUXTON
JANE NOE	ELIZABETH PATTESON
CATHERINE PENNEFATHER	EMMA LEMON
CHARLOTTE TROTTER	JULIANA HOARE
CHARLOTTE ALEXANDER	ANN NISBET
LOUISA E. KING	M. L. EDWARDS
HANNAH S. HAVELOCK	ANNE ELEANOR SANDILANDS
JANE HARRIET ELLICE	E. GORDON
SUSETTE H. SMITH	M. HICKIE
AUGUSTA MENTOR MOTT	ELLA NOEL
SOPHIA LLOYD	C. MOLYNEUX
CATHERINE MARSH	F. BEAMISH
FANNY CLARKE	J. A. BEAMISH
FANNY BRIDGES	LILIAS J. HOARE
L. A. THOMAS	AGATHA S. HOARE
M. S. SMITH	M. POYNDR
F. GAINSBROUGH	MARY BLACK
VICTORIA NOEL	FRANCES BYRON
ELIZA STRAITH	ESTHER HERSCHELL
CATHERINE CALCRAFT	ELIZABETH ORDE
EVE SWINBOURN	ELLEN RANYARD
M. WALDO	ANN DENOON
F. BROOKE	CATHERINE PARRY

NEEDLEWORK

CAROLINE GOWAN

SOPHIA GOWAN

GRACE STERLING

EMMA T. LEYCESTER

The following letter from a visitor to Beirut at this time illustrates the state of the victims of the outbursts and the spirit in which. Mrs. Bowen Thompson at once entered upon her noble work:

“Mrs. Thompson reached Beirut at the end of October. Twenty thousand refugees from Damascus and the mountains are still crowding the khans of the city. Six or eight men, women and children, huddled together in rooms of ten feet square, often without any opening but the door. Women with families are glad to get work at a piastre, (twopence) a-day, even mending roads. ‘Work, work, work,’ is all the cry. To give them needlework, teach them to do it and pay them for their labour, is one of Mrs. Thompson’s first designs. She has obtained two or three very excellent native assistants; but they all lean on her and she is obliged to look after everything. She already has a school of one hundred children coming daily and a workroom of sixty women, some of whom cut out and distribute work to one hundred and twenty others and all this is but ‘a drop in the bucket.’

She tells her own tale most graphically. In the month of November she says:- “You scarcely see any one here in anything but rags. Even if they had a length of calico or print given them, with needle and thread and hooks and eyes, not one in fifty knows how to cut it out and make it up. You see them kneading a little flour and water on a stone by the wayside sometimes, but otherwise disheartened and idle.

“I often ride past the establishment of the Sisters of Charity and there hundreds of these poor creatures sit in rows, besieging the doors for bread and flour. Many are like bears bereft of their cubs - so wild, so savage, and so reckless, one’s heart aches to see them; and I ask myself, Can these dry bones live?”

PLAN PROPOSED

“Those who come from Damascus are the most to be pitied, having been accustomed to a different life. At this time, when most wanted, teachers are scattered and schoolrooms closed, or used as depots for clothing or places of shelter; and yet, is it enough to give bread and raiment to these poor creatures while we withhold from them the bread of life and the water of salvation? Oh, how I long, even in my imperfect Arabic, to speak to them concerning their souls”

The following letter from Mrs. Bowen Thompson to her sister, unfolds at greater length the circumstances which led her to develop the idea of the schools, which she afterwards so nobly carried out.

Nov. 3rd - I have now been at Beirut a week and each day our projected work seems more and more difficult of accomplishment. The Anglo-American Committee have pledged themselves not to interfere with the subject of religion. They do not think that I shall find any women or girls to avail themselves of such opportunity of gaining their own livelihood; or if I do, that the priests will interfere. The Committee simply undertakes the faithful distribution of the funds remitted to them from England and elsewhere, without the slightest partiality of creed or sect; as far as possible to administer bodily relief, but to keep the educational department quite distinct. The Committee is willing to supply the work and payment for the same, as also the salary of an assistant, if I still feel disposed to attempt the project on my own responsibility.

“My faithless heart whispers again and again, ‘All these things are against me,’ and I am often tempted to ask, ‘Is it the Lord who hath sent me? if so, why stand I thus alone?’ In this state of perplexity, by the advice of our Consul, I came here yesterday, that I might quietly think over what I had to do and also to enjoy the benefit of the sea air and perfect quiet of this beautifully situated hotel.

PLAN PROPOSED

“Mr. and Mrs. Broe were most kind and also Consul and Mrs. Moore, who offered to do all they could for me and thought the giving work to the women and seeing they did it, could not fail to be of the greatest advantage to the poor sufferers. Mrs. B, of Damascus, entered very fully into the plan. I told her I should like to begin with the Damascenes, as they are the most to be pitied, being accustomed to such a different life. I cannot tell you how I long to be in the midst of these poor women and to be able to speak a word of loving sympathy to them. I feel sure they will take it kindly and will listen to the word of God now that their hearts are so crushed and broken. I cannot understand how any one who knows the consolations of the Gospel can see these poor wretches and be content to give them bread and clothing and withhold the Bread and Water of Life. I assure you, it is as much as I can do to stand by and not attempt with my slender knowledge of Arabic to speak to them of their never-dying souls. I know not whether I have told you of my first visit to the hospital. Mr. Tabet has given up his house for the poor sick. There are many rooms opening into the courtyard; and as I passed through these open porches, I saw the sick, the lame, the impotent, the halt and the blind, lying on their couches, waiting to be healed. Many rose up from their beds and others, who were able to walk, crowded round me, pulling open their garments, showing that their skins were shrivelled up and their bones sticking out. Several put their thumbs between their teeth and drawing them out again showed me there was nothing upon them; which I was told meant they had ‘cleanness of teeth’ (Amos 4:6); nothing to eat, not so much as would cleave to their gums. Then came their tales of woe.

“One beautiful young woman was there sick, with her three little children. Her large black eyes told a tale of sorrow. She said she was from Damascus and had seen her husband and three fine boys slain before her eyes. Her house and all she had was gone and now her little boy, the last male

SCENES OF DISTRESS

relative, lay on her knees dying. I mingled my tears with hers; and those who were standing round seemed astonished at this expression of sympathy and said one to another 'She weeps, she weeps.' This seemed to gain me their hearts and one and another held out her feverish hand, begging I would come round. I proposed to some that were well enough, to do a little work, which pleased them much and accordingly I took it on Tuesday. It was a hot day; I had had a long ride in the morning and felt very tired, but something seemed to tell me I must ride up to the hospital in the afternoon; so I took some needlework and, mounting Mrs. M's white pony, I rode up. The first room I went into, I saw a fine-looking old woman with the hand of death laid upon her brow. She had been brought in only the night before. After propping up her pillows, to make her comfortable, I tried to say a few words to her about her soul and asked, 'Was she ready to die?' She shook her head and clasped her poor shrivelled hands with an air of deep sorrow. I went out to see if there was any one who could read some message from God to her soul. Daoud, the cook, said, I have my Bible, but the people will not listen to it. I must not read it; they will be angry.' I said, 'Never mind, God will not be angry.' He looked delighted and fetched his Bible. I told him what to read. He read part of John 6:5. and such texts as 3:16 and Isa. 11. I soon saw that he was not only acquainted with his Bible; but had been taught of God. He constantly stopped and bade her say, 'Lord Jesus, save my soul,' 'Cleanse me from my sins,' 'Give me the Holy Spirit,' the poor woman repeating the words after him; while the Greek nurse stood over her, calling out at each petition, Say, 'Jesus, Mary, Joseph, save me!' The poor woman seemed at a loss, but soon gave her mind to what the young Arab cook was reading. Oh, what a grief it was to me not to be able to speak to that poor dying woman! Meanwhile, a nephew of the old woman and many of the women and girls who had gathered from the other rooms listened with interest. Then came

the assistant doctor, who said, 'The woman is dying; send for the priest.' I could only pray that Jesus, the High Priest, might be with her and absolve her from all her sins. At last the Greek priest in his full robes arrived. He turned everybody out. I kept my seat. The poor woman by this time could not speak and scarcely hear. He took from his pocket a long narrow green embroidered scarf and drawing it over his head; he began repeating what seemed a set form of exhortations and questions. The woman could not speak, but tried to make the sign of the cross. Then rising, the priest laid the other end of the scarf over the head of the woman and placing his hand on her head, he repeated a long absolution very fast, which having finished, he rolled up the scarf and left the room. I do earnestly hope that this poor woman may have received the message of Christ's finished work for her soul. She, too, was a Damascene; had been very rich; saw her husband hacked to pieces, which so affected her heart, that she had been ill ever since.

"It is now quite decided that our educational plan must be independent of the Relief Committee. They will supply the work for the hospital, etc., will pay for the making and will be thankful for any assistance. So now I feel quite free to enter upon the plan proposed by Mrs. Kinnaird and others. Now then will be the time at once to form an association *for improving the condition of the Syrian women*, and supplying them with work; all such efforts to be connected with teaching the *Word of God*. I have therefore this day made a commencement which quite surpasses my expectations. Truly the Lord works marvels, while we in our unbelief imagine He has forgotten us.

"The first evening I came here, I asked the Arab waiter, 'Did he speak English?' 'Could he read Arabic?' 'No.' 'Why don't you learn?' I asked. 'I have nobody to teach me.' I then asked to see the maid and she no sooner came than she exclaimed in Arabic, 'Oh, lady, I want to learn to read.' I took out pen and ink and wrote the first six letters of the Arabic. They repeated these letters

A DYING CHRISTIAN

till they knew them and then they both tried to *copy* them; every day they learnt a little. Yesterday I went to the Arab printing press and bought some alphabet cards. These were at once put into requisition and the waiter brought four women, relations of his, who also wanted to learn. This morning the cook of the hotel made his appearance and said, 'Lady, will you teach me?' I proposed an evening school and the master of the hotel, who speaks English, came up to me and said, 'If you will open a school here, I will give you a room - I will be the first pupil.' You may imagine how thankful I was; so I went to the printing press and told them I had come for a clever Arabic teacher, who could also speak a little English, but, above all, who had a real love for souls, to undertake an adult evening free school. They were all amazed and seemed to think there must be some mistake. However, they said their most promising teacher, Shaheen, was now in the house; and as he was disengaged, I might arrange with him. He is accordingly to come out here every evening and to teach the men and boys. The young man's heart seemed as full of joy as my own at this unlooked for opening to bring the Gospel before the people. If I find the plan succeed, I will endeavour to secure his services altogether and get him to go about among these poor refugees, whom you see sitting on their heels in large groups, without *anything to do*. I assure you, everybody's hands are so full of work in keeping these people from starving, that spiritual efforts seem quite lost sight of. But I must not blame them. They say the slightest unadvised step of the kind might bring the Mohammedans upon them in a moment. I look to God to provide some home for me here, as I must have my work in the house, or close by; for during the rains it is impossible for ladies to go out.

"Now, dear friends, you see I must depend entirely upon you for funds and supplies of all kinds - above all, prayer that this effort may be blessed. Amidst all my trials and disappointments, one text has been most

marvellously realized by me: 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee.'

"Nov. 17th - I must entreat our friends at once to form an association under our excellent head, Lord Shaftesbury, for the establishment of (don't be startled!) English industrial, ragged and evening schools in Syria. So fully do I feel persuaded that God is opening a wide door for the diffusion of His word through English instrumentality in this land, that I do not hesitate to say, 'Let us be up and doing; the night is far spent, the day is at hand.' And oh, let no fear of Turks, Druses, or worse, cause us to halt and delay; Greater is He that is for us, than all that are against us.' And besides, is not the Lord the defence of His people, 'a wall of fire round about them in time of danger'? No, no; this is no time for expediency or half-measures. In proportion as we possess Christ, so will God prosper our work. Our plan now is to take a house with four rooms at least opening upon the lower court and three above for the private residence.

"First Room - In one below we shall gather the children; and Saada Baraket, the excellent young widow from Damascus, whose husband was killed and herself and child left without anything, is to be the teacher of the *Ragged School*. Her salary 200 piastres per month, with food and clothing.

"Second Room - *Industrial department* for women and girls, under the superintendence of one of the Damascene widows.

"Third Room - *The depot* for receiving and giving out the work of the Anglo-American Committee, under the care of another widow from Damascus, who has lost her all and who will also help me in the housekeeping department.

"Fourth Room - *Stores from England*, which I trust, like the widow's cruse of oil, will not fail as long as there is an empty cruse that must be filled. In these several departments I have now the promise of help, in the way of reading to the women, from one or perhaps two ladies. Mr. Consul

WORK BEGUN

Moore is much pleased with the evening school for teaching the young men Arabic and English. I have engaged the master for about fourteen pounds per annum. We are only waiting for you to send us the books. Arabic Bibles and Testaments I look to from the British and Foreign Bible Society. English spelling-books, adult reading, Scripture portions, map of Syria, etc., I greatly long for and trust they will be sent by some rapid communication. In your next consignment please send English starch and blue, vegetable and flower seeds. How I long to tell you a little of the politics of the place! The short-sighted policy of England astonishes all. The natives say, the French have taken the country and English money; and they will soon find every door to India shut against them. Cairo will ere long be in the hands of the French. The country is being fast corrupted by French soldiery. The Times correspondent seems to write with Turkish spectacles. Those at least who are well acquainted with matters say so.

December 21st, 1860 - I must beg you will excuse a letter of general information. First, then, today, dear Augusta's birthday, I have begun the sewing school for women and about thirty are now at work, poor things, all mourners and sufferers. The opening was with reading and prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Ferette, who explained Titus ii. to them, the different conditions, habits and costumes of European women, in contrast to the idle, degraded position of women here; and said that their sisters in England desired to make them as happy as they were. He translated into Arabic the rules I had drawn up and told them 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. You should have seen the deep fixed attention of all present. The door was besieged by some fifty poor women, all entreating to be taken in; but I had to be firm and refuse them and shut the

door. We are well supplied with work from the Relief Committee. The Rev. Dr. Thomson at once got me a number of warm jackets and clothing to make up for the people from Deir el Kamar, as they wish to send them from Beirut as soon as possible. So now we are hard at work. The Relief Committee will pay me one piastre and a half per day for each woman, three piastres for two, or, if need be, three helpers, Damascenes but I shall have to pay the teachers about thirty shillings per week. I will do all as economically as I can. The teachers are delighted with their work and even these few hours have made a great change in their expression. One poor woman came in during a pelting rain, with nothing but an under-garment and a few rags to cover her, while her sickly babe was barely covered with wet tatters. I took from our bundle of old clothes a little night-gown and frock and we dressed the crying babe, to the great delight of all the women. Whenever we get our boxes and can afford to give a few garments to these poor people, it will be a boon indeed.

“December 29th, 1860, Beirut - Your generous and most welcome gifts by the Christina arrived the day before Christmas and have now all passed the Custom House. You cannot conceive the sensation which the arrival of so many boxes caused, still less the joy and gratitude in unpacking one after another. How can I sufficiently thank you? I hardly know where to begin or where to leave off. The abundant supply of ready-made clothing, the materials for dresses, thimbles, scissors, school books, lessons, maps, pictures, Bibles, all one after another, have called forth my hearty thanks and those of many others.

Some of the emirs have heard of my intention to open a school for the poor and have asked would I not take their children and educate them? Such an opening has never yet occurred and it is now a matter of consideration whether I can venture to enter upon a work of this kind, or whether friends at home are ready to supply the funds needful to meet the outlay.

EMIR'S DAUGHTER

Today the gentleman who has the distribution of the relief to all the Damascenes, paid me a long visit and begged me to look after the widows and orphans of the *aristocracy* of poor Syria, who are now in great want. He said he could bring in many of these widows with four or five children, most of them without proper clothing. When I told him of the request that had been made to me to open a school for the daughters of the emirs, 'I trust you will do this,' he said; it will be conferring an essential benefit on the people.' He is to come again on Monday to discuss the matter. My sympathies go very much for the upper classes, who as yet have not been reached like the rest, except in the way of temporary relief."

Just as Mrs. Thompson was commemorating the birthday of a beloved sister by opening the widows' school, that sister's home was laid in ashes. It was the place whence the first large consignments for the schools had been dispatched and it was feared the calamity might prove a drawback; whereas, in the good providence of God, it was overruled to give fresh impetus to the work. Mr. and Mrs. Mott, having lost their home in England, resolved to devote themselves to personal service in the Syrian Mission; and, after a short residence in Switzerland, they finally settled in Beirut, where Mrs. Thompson had already been joined by her younger sister, Miss Lloyd; and thus were loving and devoted agents raised up to continue the Mission when its noble founder was called to the service above.

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA
CHAPTER 4

AT the close of the last year Mrs. Thompson secured, in the environs of Beirut, a house well adapted for the purposes of her school, with workrooms for the women and accommodation for the orphans.

Here she soon gathered more than thirty Hasbeyan widows, whose appearance rapidly improved and who for the first time learned habits of cleanliness. Some of them could now read a little and all were willing to learn. The adult, work-school was always opened with reading the Bible and prayer and a hymn repeated by the whole school. They were soon able to sing together in Arabic the first verse of 'My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary.'

Mrs. T. found it necessary, not only to secure monitors, but to seek for superior assistance for the girls' school, especially as there was a prospect of making her upper school partially self-supporting, since families who sent their daughters to the French Sisters of Charity were anxious to place them

POVERTY OF THE WIDOWS

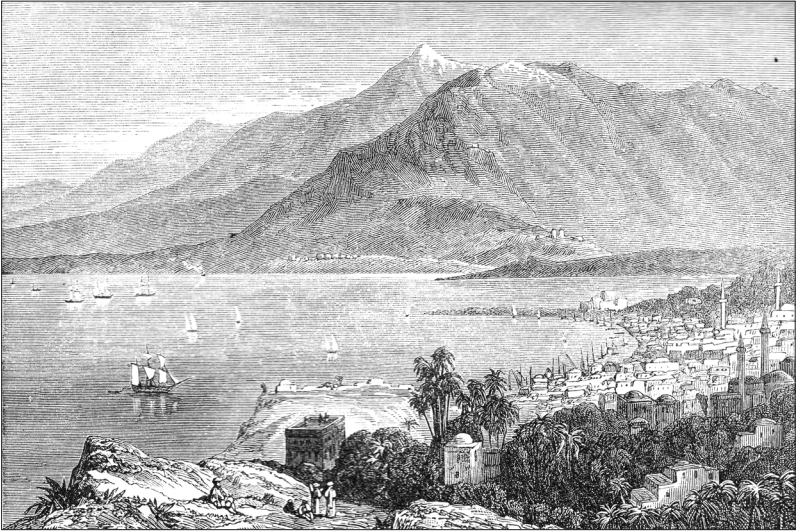
in preference under the care of the English lady, but were unwilling that they should give up their study of the French language, in which some of them had made good progress.

So rapidly did the numbers increase, that within a month she had to open a third school in adjoining premises. Next, she engaged the services of Selim Kessab, a pious young man from Damascus, to act as interpreter, make inquiry into different cases, visit the parents, instruct the servants and conduct an Arabic family worship.

Mrs. Thompson's letters at this period are filled with harrowing accounts of the misery and destitution she found in the abodes of those who had enjoyed affluence in happy homes before the massacre. Many with scarcely any clothing to cover them, ashamed to go out or appear in the work-school, but anxious for work at home, willing to make paletots for two piastres, for which the regular price, was ten. Mrs. T.'s time was chiefly absorbed in superintending the cutting out, delivery of needlework and overlooking her subordinates. Yet, amidst all, she never lost sight of her missionary calling and, though deeply impressed with the imperative claims of the starving widows and orphans, she could not but contrast the disparity of the contributions raised in England. Already had £50,000 been subscribed for their temporal relief; £110 only for her evangelistic work and the maintenance of her schools. Well might she conclude one of her letters with the remark, "Their past history is too overwhelming to dwell upon - the present is all sadness - and the future without hope."

Soon she had to convert an adjacent stable into a fourth schoolroom, or rather workroom, for her additional adult pupils. Still her schools were full to overflowing and many had to be refused, crying out, 'Do take this one. It is only one more.'

In the month of February an infant school had to be added, which in



TOWN OF BEIRUT AND MOUNT LEBANON

A FIFTH SCHOOL OPEN

a week received ninety children; and a few days after, Mrs. Thompson commenced throwing a set of stables into one, to form a large room for a fifth, or young women's school.

On February 18th, 1861, Mrs. B. Thompson writes thus:

"A Christian Bedouin arrived here a week ago and had it announced in the churches that four Christian girls had been rescued from the Mohammedans and any mother who had lost a daughter was to apply at the Greek Consulate. Much excitement prevailed among the women and a day or too after another poor girl was brought to Beirut. The first thing her friends did was to bring her to me and, in the good providence of God, her mistress' mother was one of my workers and it was she who brought her. The poor child is only eleven, but shame and sorrow filled her young heart, as she saw herself surrounded by friends who had known her at Damascus. Saada Baraket exclaimed, 'Oh! Mrs. Thompson, I knew that girl at Damascus. She was a bright, intelligent girl.' We were in the garden and the women flocked around the girl, who wept as if her heart would break and all mingled their tears with hers.

"The question now was, 'What was to be done with this helpless girl? She had no mother; her father a refugee in the mountains, her mistress now poor like herself. Of course, she could not be received into the orphan house; so I gave her a suit of clean things and sent her with her mistress to the bath and arranged to obtain a bed at two piastres and a half a day from the Relief Committee, on condition that she came to our women's school. 'May the blessing of God rest on your head!' exclaimed many grateful hearts; and I had to go, like Joseph, to my chamber to weep. At noon the Bedouin who had rescued the other four girls made his appearance in the long avenue, which caused the greatest excitement. He told the simple story of having rescued four girls at the time of the massacre and that they were all at Kerak, about thirteen days' journey from here, beyond the Dead Sea. The mother and aunt

GROWTH OF WORK

of one of the girls also came with him. He said he had been here eight days, but had not been able to get the case taken up and he was obliged to return home next day. What he wanted was money to pay for the mules, some soldiers and backshish to the Arabs to let them pass. After much deliberation I mounted my horse and went to Lord Dufferin, who kindly took the case in hand. Now, dear friends, what is to be done with the poor girls when they come? Their own friends will care for them, with a little help. Do, I entreat you, extend your sisterly aid to those afflicted ones and the Lord surely will provide the means. They are all under fourteen.

March 3rd, 1861 - It was with much thankfulness to God I learned that Lord Shaftesbury not only expressed his interest in our institution, but that he had planned measures for its being continued, say for three or five years. I have carefully read over his Lordship's remarks and suggestions and feel greatly obliged by the benefit of his large experience. You will see by my two previous letters that, the work having now assumed a more definite form, I had arrived at the decision to stop here and give my whole attention to those under this roof; and truly the care of all these women and children, not to say of the teachers, is more than I can carry on by myself.

"Ever since the proposal was made that I should draw funds to the amount of £500 per annum and that Miss A should come out to help me, I have naturally made my arrangements with the hope of this aid being accorded as soon as possible.

"When I began, amidst great discouragement, I had not the slightest idea how large and how rapidly the work would grow; and when I look at the schools as they now stand, I own I marvel to see what the Lord has wrought in little more than two months and a half. Not a single woman or child has been asked to come here, but I have had to select and now we have sixty-five women and 110 children; and here for the present we must stop, for, as it is, the

RAISING THE WOMEN

care of this large flock completely exhausts my time and strength. Added to this, refugees from all parts come here. From dawn to dark, notwithstanding all precautions to admit none but our own women and children, others make their way into the garden and follow me, from room to room with entreaties for work and clothing. You say Lord Shaftesbury asked for a regular estimate of expenses and full details of what I actually propose to do. I can easily give you the expenses of the past, but an estimate for the future is not so easy.

“The Relief Committee closes their operations, as far as the clothing department is concerned, on the 1st of May and we must try to get work from private families or the bazaars. The value of improving the present opportunity seems to absorb my whole soul and to demand far more attention than has yet been directed to give a wholesome bias to the female character; and truly they need it and begin to feel their need. The personal appearance, cleanliness and demeanour of these women is also much improved and they begin to look happier and now work for the Relief Committee and the German Hospital. Indeed, as Mr. Van de Velde observed on seeing our widows’ school, ‘In raising the women, you are raising them to the Saviour.’

“In the girls’ school, under Miriam, aided by Salome, there are sixty-five, ages from ten to sixteen. All can now read words of three letters and do a little cyphering and writing on slates.

“In the juvenile school, under Sara, there are fifty-five, children from four to fourteen, learning the alphabet and texts of Scripture by dictation. In all four schools the first hour is devoted to Scripture instruction and the afternoon to needlework. No objection has been offered by any one to the Bible being taught - quite the contrary. Even the Greek priest from Hasbeya came to thank me for the care bestowed by us on the education of his two children.

“In the cutting-out department four Damascenes are employed

the greater part of the day, with the exception of an hour and a half in the morning, which they spend in Saada's school, learning to read and write. I had almost forgotten our Sunday-evening class, when some of the parents and brothers, as well as our workers and their friends, come. The few who can read sit round the tables and read a verse in turn; after which Selim reads a chapter and explains it and many questions are asked: we close with prayer.

"The demand for Bibles is greater than my slender means can satisfy and they are too poor to purchase for themselves - besides this, the American press can only let me have twenty more copies, as their stock is exhausted.

"As far as I can now see, it appears to me and to all who have visited the establishment, that we cannot do better than keep the present work in operation, giving every facility to the women and children to make progress and, if possible, teach them to be clean in their persons and to observe the rules, which have to be repeated every day because so neglected. Theft and falsehood are very common evils and hence my labours are greatly increased in having to keep an account of all the work and in having an eye on every native, who enters the house. Whenever discovered, theft is severely punished."*

"The females in the East have been so greatly neglected and degraded, that it is of the utmost importance to give them a chance to rise above their wretched lot. Therefore I would earnestly plead their cause with our friends in England and entreat them to bear these bereaved women and children constantly on their hearts in prayer. Pecuniary help, I know, will not be

* Mrs. Thompson was essentially practical in her work and in order to employ the class of women who could not sew, she hired a house in the Greek quarter of the town, where she opened a laundry. The admiral and officers of Her Majesty's ships of war greatly aided and encouraged her in her noble efforts and regularly sent to her laundry all the officers' and ships' linen, thereby supplying them with work and the means of livelihood. Captain Sullivan presented a mangle and the ship's carpenters made the fittings. At the same time she opened a school for young and old, where the Gospel of peace was taught them.

wanting. God is raising up friends where least expected; and although it would be a great weight off my mind to know that the means are in hand for prosecuting this work beyond the short time that I shall probably be here, yet I am enabled to cast this care also upon God and feel persuaded that friends in England will send the needful help.

“By this post you will receive the Syrian ladies’ answer to the letter from the ladies of England. So very many answers have come, that it was found impossible to translate them all; but Mr. Butros Bistani took parts of each letter, especially that of the Damascenes and made one document, which has been sent round to the parties and they have signed it, as you will see. Many of the chief people have called on me and a deputation of fifty came as representatives of the various classes to offer thanks to the ladies of England - among others, the widow of Prince Assaad and her son.

“They all assembled in the drawing-room, which was crammed when I went in. The young prince spoke French and interpreted for them all. One elderly lady at once riveted my attention. Fine chiselled features, with deep suffering stamped on her lofty brow, while her long black veil showed she too was a widow from Hasbeya. They all expressed their hearty thanks for the sympathy shown them and said they had now no friends to go to and that it was to England their eyes were turned. Yes, they said, ‘we look to England to do us justice for the blood of our husbands and sons shed by the Druses.’ On this, the elderly lady above alluded to, whose sons were slain by the Druses, stood forth in the midst and silently drew from her bosom a cap that had been saturated in blood. It was the cap of her son. A shudder came over all and deep silence, followed by sighs and weeping. ‘This is my son’s cap,’ said the old lady, this is his blood; and see his locks of hair,’ opening the cap and holding up these precious relics in her fingers. ‘They cut my son in pieces before my eyes; they have left me nothing but his blood. I ask, ‘Does not this

FORGIVENESS

call to heaven for justice?’ And she put the cap back into her bosom and sat down on the ground without another word, or shedding a tear, while all around sobbed with grief. I said, ‘Give me that cap: try and forget the past.’ Again she rose and with dignity replied, ‘Give up my son’s blood! oh, no; I have nothing of him left to me but this and I am left alone.’ I made Selim read the gracious invitation of the blessed Jesus to the weary and heavy-laden and said, ‘I will tell you of a blood more precious, which cries for pardon and not for vengeance, even the blood of Jesus the Messiah.’ The story of the cross melted their hearts into calmness; in a moment their lamentations ceased and with breathless attention they listened to the words of John 14 and Hebrews 12, after which prayer was offered up by Saada.

“Two days after, the widow of ‘R’, ‘H’, from Damascus, called with Loo loo. They were of the highest family in Damascus. She said she had known my husband well; that he was often at their house, not only as a physician, but as a Christian friend who had brought the Gospel before them. She told me her sad tale, how she stood up to her knees in blood, while the Turks stripped her of her ornaments, one attempting to cut off her finger for the sake of the diamond ring, another cutting her neck with a knife in taking away her pearl necklace. Then their sufferings at the castle, exposed to the burning sun, with scarcely a rag to cover them, hungry and thirsty and how some Mohammedans who were their friends brought them bread and meat, which, when they had tasted, they became sick and her mother and darling child died in convulsions from the poison the wretches had put into the food. Others also died from the treacherous act.

“Dear friends, these are some of the sufferers for whom I would engage your sympathy and help. Their lives are truly a burden to them. They have none of the consolations of the Gospel, no employment, no resources of reading and writing to draw off the mind from the cruelties of the past and to

strengthen them under present sufferings and alarms for the future.”

Letter from the Women and the Teachers of the English Industrial School at Beirut, to the Ladies in London:

JUNE, 1861

“Exalted ladies and Christian sisters,

This school was the first school in Syria for women and it has comforted us in our griefs and sorrows. About fifty of us women have begun to learn to read, who did not know our alphabet when we came and now we get on with our spelling. About twelve of us, who had learnt a little before, now read in the New Testament, which you sent us. We were hoping the school would keep on till we could improve in our reading and till we could read the Testament like the others, which alone can comfort us poor afflicted Syrian women; before, when we wanted to learn to read, we could not and people used to laugh at us.

“One of us, a very young widow, whose husband wanted her to read, went to the boys’ school; but her mother-in-law and neighbours began to mock her and said they hoped she was not going to try and get a place in the Government; so she gave it up very soon, yet now she is very glad she has the opportunity to come to this school and nobody to trouble and disturb her.

“Another poor woman, who lost her husband and two sons in one night, at the American hospital, after having made their escape from Hasbeya, says that, when she lost those two sons, she almost got crazy and could not help swearing very large oaths and cursing God; ‘but when I came to the school,’ she says, ‘I left those things outside the schools.’ I am the woman who did not know anything. I did not know that God had created the world in six days. I did not know the Lord’s Prayer. I thought it was enough to do the work of my house in Hasbeya, to go to the well and get water and keep my children; and when, on Sunday, I went to church, I could not understand what I heard; but now I come to the school and understand and can go

LETTER FROM THE SYRIAN WIDOWS

to the Protestant church and hear the sermon. I am still very ignorant; I need to learn still more; and if the school stops, where shall I go? what will become of me?

When Mrs. Thompson told us today that there would be no more money to let the school go on when the Relief Committee breaks up next month, I, Saada Baraket, the teacher of the women, nearly seventy in number, was very sorry, but yet hope, from the kindness you have shown us since the massacre, that you will keep it on a little longer, till we are more settled and because we have not yet received anything of what we have lost. And where could we live? Our country is yet in disorder and our houses are burnt down; and if they build them, how can we go back and dwell there without our dear husbands and sons, who were always present with us? Now, if the school is stopped, we shall then go back, as we were before it began, wandering from place to place, crying and beating our breasts, having nobody to comfort us. We beseech, we implore you, exalted ladies and very dear Christian sisters, that you will not forget us in such a time as this. 'Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.' Pray for our women's school, that we may all have the clean new heart."

SAADA BARAKET, TEACHER

TAGLA ISHKI

WERDAH HALIBEE

SHEHENE BARAKET

[SIGNED ONLY BY THOSE WOMEN WHO HAVE LEARNT TO WRITE THEIR OWN SIGNATURES.]

In May, Mrs. Thompson writes:

“The little ones in our school are very interesting and most hopeful. The day before yesterday I went to see a poor dying child; the mother was in deep affliction, the father sitting in a corner earnestly reading the New Testament. I at once recognized him as the man who had borrowed a Testament from me last December for one month and renewed his request a second and a third month. He told me that at that time he only knew his letters; but having abundance of leisure, he had made that book his study from sunrise to sunset; and that now, when his heart was ready to break in seeing his child

BIBLE READING

sink into the grave, he felt comfort and support in God's word, which dried up his tears. 'Oh, lady,' he said, 'you don't know what you have done for me by giving me this book; and (pointing to one of our infants who had followed me into the room) 'our neighbour's little girl, comes in and repeats her pretty hymns with my two children' (also our scholars). This little tot, who I really thought knew only her letters, now stood up and in a clear voice repeated,

*'My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary.'*

"Truly as I looked around and saw the deep emotion with which the afflicted family listened to the words uttered by the child, I said to myself, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God has perfected praise.' This little one lives a great way off and yet never misses coming to us; before daybreak she says, I must get ready for my school,' and comes hand-in-hand with two other little girls.

"June 20th, 1861 - His Excellency Fuad Pasha having appointed Effendi Daoud to accompany me to inspect the pieces of land which it was proposed to grant as an endowment for our schools, I went, accompanied by the Consul, to the vicinity of the Pine Forest. The day was intensely hot and on my returning home the Pasha's dragoman came flying on horseback; a message had been sent to my house in my absence, to say that the Hareem of Fuad Pasha would do themselves the pleasure of calling upon me at three o'clock and that the ladies had already set out. I hastened home, where the servants and teachers had already prepared everything and in half an hour the Hareem arrived. It consisted of the wife of Fuad Pasha, a handsome, stout, very good-tempered lady, dressed in white book muslin, her dress training a yard and a half on the ground as she walked and her head and bosom richly

VISIT OF THE PASHA'S FAMILY

covered with pearls, emeralds and diamonds. Next was her lovely daughter-in-law, the Widow of Fuad. Pasha's eldest son, with her little boy about seven years old, dressed in full scarlet regimentals; also an adopted daughter of Fuad Pasha's and nursed by his wife. There were three beautiful young ladies in attendance and two servants. The Hareem was accompanied by a French lady, a very pleasant person, who acted as interpreter. She began by saying how much his Excellency had been pleased to hear of these English schools, which he understood were doing a great deal of good. He wished to say how much he liked the plan I had adopted of making them industrial schools and that he was quite ready to forward any wish I might lay before him for the extension of such a work. I named the laundry and a few small cottages for the best of our widows who would be engaged in the work and she begged I would submit the matter to the Pasha.

"The young Lady Ikbah played several airs on the melodion and her little boy danced a Turkish dance. He took a great fancy to a little red book which I gave him. After partaking of refreshments and smoking a cigarette, the ladies repaired to the large hall, where all our schools were assembled. The melodion was brought out; and the ladies played to amuse the children. The children then repeated some poems sang a few Arabic hymns and went through their calisthenic exercises, such as we have in our infant schools at home, so far as I have been able to teach them. This amused the ladies excessively and they laughed heartily when the wee monitor stood up and all the little tots imitated her actions. The women also came in and stood at the further end of the hall; but, do what I would, I could not get them to sing a single hymn. They said their *hearts were too heavy*.

The ladies then returned to the saloon, examined tied the work, which they pronounced excellent and ordered six shirts for his young Highness demises and pantaloons for the Effendin, other work, if we can procure the

very fine material required. They asked me, had I a good wet-nurse among the refugees whom I could recommend, or a very nice orphan they could adopt? The latter I declined, but the wet-nurse I hope to send.

“Before leaving, the Effendin gave me a little bundle of money tied up in yellow gauze, contain some hundred small coins. I was amazed at the generous gift and thanked her heartily; but, oh! tell it not in Gath! on opening the splendid bourse, behold, they were all piastre-pieces, which when seen through the yellow gauze dazzled like gold! However, on counting them, they were found to make three Turkish liras. I was at this time greatly distressed for funds; I had nothing to pay my widows for their weekly earnings, each receiving three piastres a day. I had told them I had no money to pay them and we had all united in prayer to our heavenly Father, whose open hand had hitherto supplied all our needs. What, then, was our surprise on finding that the gift presented by the Turkish Effendin was the very exact sum which I owed to the widows! Like myself, they were struck by the coincidence and while praising God for this fresh instance of His care, they exclaimed that this money from a Turkish lady was like God sending flesh and bread to Elijah by the ravens!

“The ladies robed and departed with many kisses and a cordial invitation to the palace in the course of the ensuing week. They remounted their steeds, the eunuchs being in attendance and carefully keeping off all curious eyes.

“*July 13th* - Yesterday went, according to appointment, to return the visit of the Hareem of Fuad Pasha. The lady sent her servant on horseback to say she was awaiting my arrival. After dismounting in the court, I ascended a noble flight of steps to the house door, which was of glass, with trellis-work, from which the ladies in attendance were observing my approach. On entering, I was received by the lady of the Italian physician, who acted throughout as interpreter and was very pleasing and amiable. The lady of

TURKISH LADIES

Fuad Pasha then entered, attended by some lovely young maidens, all dressed like herself, in white muslin, only the Effendin's was of the finest texture and had a long train and her head ornamented with diamonds. Next came her daughter-in-law, who speaks a little French. After the usual salutations and the attendants taking off my burnous and hat, sherbet and sweets were served in golden cups set with jewels; and hanging over the front of the salver was a magnificent cloth of crimson satin, richly embroidered in gold by the Effendin. All the napkins were of fine texture, worked in gold. The Effendin made many inquiries about my school. I brought her some specimens of work, which much pleased her; also a paper shirt collar for the Pasha, which Captain Rice had given me for the purpose.

"I told them about the laundry and the gold embroidery and the earnest entreaties I had received to open schools elsewhere, especially in Beirut and Zachleh. She asked me to send for Zakoor, our woman who teaches the gold work and she soon came, bringing various specimens of the work now in hand. The ladies tried on the zouaves, gave orders for one and the Effendin for a large paletôt of black satin, which she will have cut out herself and bring next Thursday, when the Hareem purpose paying me another visit. We then chatted and looked at various pieces of work made by the ladies. They examined my collar, sleeves and gloves and begged me to order similar ones from England for them. Then the Lady Ikbah played on the Arab guitar and after a while a telegram from Damascus arrived, in reply to one from the palace about an hour before. After that there was a stir and the Pasha arrived. The Effendin rose and met him in the hall and they both went into the opposite saloon, returning in a few minutes, when I was introduced to the Pasha. His Excellency was kind enough to express his gratification to see me, having heard that I had come to aid the poor refugees and that the schools were doing so much good. I then spoke to him about the land. He replied

TURKISH LADIES

with much fluency in French that the present divisions in the mountains and Zachleh would prevent him from doing anything about land in that quarter, at least for the present. He then asked how I liked the country - what were the number of women and children and said it would be well if such schools could be extended. After conversing with his daughter-in-law, the lady interpreter and myself, he rose and apologised, having letters to answer. I was asked to stay longer and, after a visit of nearly three hours, I took my leave, the Effendin presenting me with an ornament for my hair, which she had made and promising to return my visit.

“Dec. 20th, 1861 - I must now give you an account of my final interview with Fund Pasha and his Hareem. His departure was very sudden, he having had the honour of being nominated Grand-Vizier. I was just mounting my donkey, when one of the Pasha's servants entered the garden gate with a letter. He said it was from the young lady that they were going to leave tomorrow, but would like to see me, if I could come at once. I said I would do myself the honour in half an hour. I went back to the house, as I wished Madame le Bas to accompany me. We were at once admitted to the palace and were taken to the bedchamber of Fuad Pasha's lady, who had been to see me before and who is, so far as I can understand it, his wife or chief wife. Poor thing! she looked so wan and sickly, reclining on a low settle, in quite an ordinary costume, cotton print full drawers and black silk paletôt and a black and coloured handkerchief tied over her head. She was very glad to see me; but as she speaks only Turkish and her interpreter was absent, it was but little we could make out at first. However, afterwards an Arab attendant came and then we were able to hold a little conversation. I wanted to speak to her about Fuad Pasha's promised donation to the laundry, yet thought it best not to name it, but simply presented her with a beautiful purple velvet cushion, richly worked in gold, which I begged she would give to his Excellency, or rather his

TURKISH LADIES

Highness, as he is now called, as a remembrance from our schools.

“She asked me to go and see the lady of the physician to the Hareem, who had called upon me. We accordingly repaired to the house of Nashiff Pasha, where we saw the doctor and his wife, who, like the others, was glad to see me and said she had often resolved to mount her horse and bid me good-bye. All here, as in the palace, was in a state of preparation for removing early next day. While there, my former French maid came and said the Lady Ikbah was much disappointed I had not come into her room to wish her good-bye. We accordingly returned to the palace and were taken into the bedroom of the Lady Ikbah. She was reclining, partly attired in the Turkish costume, on an ebony bedstead without curtains. She asked why I had never called to see her? She had sent many times to me; how was it I had not come? How were the schools getting on? and were the little children as happy as before? She said she had been ill some time with the prevailing fever from which, indeed, all had suffered. She was even now in fever and yet they would have to depart to-morrow. They were all sorry to leave Beirut, which was in many respects greatly preferable to Constantinople. She said, would come to see her at Constantinople? ‘I said I certainly would endeavour to do so, if I ever returned thither. We conversed in French and she had by her side a pocket French dictionary. I now began to feel my responsibility in having become acquainted with this lovely young Turkish lady and having never said a word to her about her soul. So I sat in silence by my bed and prayed God would give me a word to say. Turning round, she said, ‘You *will* come and see me at Constantinople.’ I said, If we do not see each other in this world, I do greatly hope we may meet in the next world.’ She laughed and said, ‘Il y a des personnes qui croient que nous reviendrons; mais moi, je ne le crois pas.’ spoke to her of the resurrection; but she did not seem to comprehend much on the subject, being evidently greatly in ignorance and darkness. I said we

had a sure word for it and that was the word of God; and asked her, would she read it if I gave her a copy of the New Testament in French? She said she would. At this moment the doctor entered the apartment to see his patient, accompanied by a young Turkish attendant.

“The Lady Ikbah called to her maid to bring her a veil or shawl. The physician most modestly retired to the window while the lady wrapped her sweet face in the folds of her rich cashmere shawl. We then took our leave and I promised, if possible, to send her the French Testament in the morning. She embraced Madame le Bas and me and, accompanied by many attendants who were waiting in the hall, we left the palace.

“On our return, I at once selected a small French Testament and happily we had a silk cover, all ready embroidered in gold with the Turkish crescent, which made the whole look most appropriate. Next morning the rain came down in torrents. What was to be done? I was anxious she should have the Testament before starting and also wished to see Colonel Fraser, to know if he had any answer from the Pasha.

“I accordingly wrapped myself up and mounted my donkey, to leave the Testament. The Kawass begged I would let him go up and tell the ladies I was here; and soon he returned asking me to come up. I was rather dismayed, as I was wet and not at all in trim for a visit to the Hareem. However, I am glad I went - all were as busy as possible, preparing to send off the last of the goods and chattels and next the departure of part of the Hareem.

“I was introduced into the sitting-room of the Lady Ikbah, who was surrounded by several others, among them the Italian lady. They marvelled at my coming to see them in such a storm. I told her it was to bring her the word of God and put into her hand the little French Testament. She was charmed with its appearance and read a few words. Her little boy came in and asked, ‘Where was the book?’

NEW TESTAMENTS RECEIVED

“The news had already spread from room to room. Three other little boys, sons of the Pasha, also came in, each handling the book and asking what it was. Madame ‘R’ said, ‘Why did I give it to an unbeliever, a Mohammedan?’ I told her our conversation about the resurrection and she said, ‘They know very little, they will never read it.’ The young lady asked what we were speaking about. Madame ‘R’, taking the New Testament, spoke to her in Turkish; and from her gesture and some words I could understand, I fancy that she did not wish her to keep the book. I knew Madame ‘R’ was a Roman Catholic and therefore did not feel surprised. The young lady left the room and Madame ‘R’ and I had some conversation respecting the Gospel. She said, ‘Why is it the priests keep the book from us?’ I replied, ‘Because God’s word plainly declares that it is a free salvation which He promises us and that by the blood of Christ alone we can be accepted.’ She said she had never seen a Bible and asked if I could procure her one. I said I would try, not having any of my own left.

“I now thought it high time to take my leave, when Madame ‘R’ said the Effendin wanted to see me; so we went into her room and found her sitting on a low divan, looking somewhat better. She said, as the sea was so very high, the Pasha had delayed his departure till the next day. She told me how very much the Pasha had been pleased with the velvet cushion and greatly admired the work. She then asked me about the book I had given to her daughter-in-law, the Lady Ikbah; why had I given it her? I said, ‘Because she was not aware of the great truth that we should all rise again.’

“The Effendin then entered into a long explanation of her faith to Madame who translated thus much to me - that the Effendin did believe that women as well as men should live after death, the good in Paradise, the bad in Gehenna. Oh, how did I regret my ignorance of the Turkish language and that our interpreter was a Roman Catholic! There was a sudden stir and

the attendants announced that Fuad Pasha was approaching; so we all rose in haste and had to run across the great hall, as the Pasha had already entered and we had almost to cross his path. However, I looked straight before me and, with the other ladies, did my utmost to escape being looked at.

“We returned to Lady Ikbah’s sitting-room. The rain was pouring in torrents. In a quarter of an hour a young slave attendant entered and said his Highness wished to see Mrs. Thompson. There was no help for it. Equipped as I was, I had to go. I found him seated on the low divan previously occupied by the Effendin, while she was seated on the visitor’s divan. His Highness rose on my entrance and, addressing me in French, which he speaks remarkably well, said it gave him great pleasure to see me again before he left and, requesting me to be seated, said he had to thank me for the good I was doing to the refugees and that he thought it most desirable the women should be taught. He inquired about the numbers in attendance, their proficiency, etc. and then, ‘in regard to your little money affair, I have ordered it to be paid to Colonel Fraser for you.’ He also thanked me for the cushion and I told him of the proposal to send work to the great Exhibition in London. I said that, while I had to congratulate him on his appointment as Grand-Vizier, I could not but lament his departure from Syria, where he had acted with so much wisdom and decision. He said he also regretted it. I said we were not without fears for the future and who might be the Pasha the Sultan had appointed. He said, ‘Don’t be afraid that I shall spoil my own work; I have the appointing of my successor: if he does not do justice, he has before him the fate of the former Pasha.’ He added that he considered the country at present in a tranquil state and had told the people he would always look to the interests of Syria.

“The Lady Ikbah, who was sitting at his side with the little French Testament in her hand, made signs to the Effendin not to speak; but she

INTEREST OF FUAD PASHA

did and said something in Turkish about the *Ketab* - the book and I at once gathered it was about returning the book to me, as Madame 'R' had proposed. But he said, 'Yok, yok,' (no, no) and the young lady smiled at me and clasped her little treasure. I asked after his adopted daughter. She also had had the fever and was slowly recovering. He sent for her; but as she was long in making her appearance, I was afraid to presume by staying too long, so I rose to take leave. They all rose and shook hands and Ikbah kissed me tenderly.

"The Pasha again commended my courage in venturing out such a day to see them and said it would always afford him great pleasure to hear our schools were getting on.

"On reaching the hall entrance, the young adopted daughter of the Pasha ran up to me. She shook her head and, as far as I could make out, reproached me for not coming to see her and seemed to want me to go back to her room; but, not having any interpreter and feeling already tired and chilled, I thought it was best to take advantage of the lull in the storm to mount my donkey and go to Colonel Fraser to make sure of the money and was thankful to find subsequently that it had been received.

"I told the Pasha I should like to have his autograph and he has returned my album with these words written in Turkish and French:

'Ne refusez jamais à ceux qui souffrent, le bien qui est dans votre pouvoir.*'

LE 31 DECEMBRE, 1861

BEIRUT, July 5th, 1861

"In a former letter I told you of the strong desire expressed by the people of Zachleh that I should open an industrial school, similar to this one. I was also informed that the best land for agricultural purposes was in the Buka'a,

* Never refuse those who suffer, the good which is in your power.

VISIT TO ZACHLEH

about half a mile from Zachleh and I accordingly sent Selim and Abdullah to look at it, previous to my applying for a grant of the same to Fuad Pasha. The Rev. Mr. Alexander kindly offered to accompany them and at four o'clock they started for Zachleh, which they reached that evening. The following is from Selim's description of their visit: - 'A chief whom we met on the way said, 'I am with the English at heart and I wish to be under English direction. I wish to have schools. I have about 250 under me.' He offered his house for a school. The Chief of Zachleh, of his own accord, said, 'We want a school; I can bring you many persons who are anxious to learn and I will of my house to Mrs. Thompson.' We then went to see a house which a lady from Zachleh had offered, if Mrs. T. would establish a school there. It is large and very high up and overlooks the village and the river; and there are large grounds and a vineyard behind the house. On the road we met a chief man, who begged us to come to his house. He said, 'I have heard that you are thinking to make schools here and am very glad of the news. I hope you will not change your mind! I asked, 'Is there no fear now to open a Protestant school?' He said, 'No.' The same day we met a complete Protestant, who was wishing more than all that a school should be opened. We then rode to see the land about a mile from Zachleh and we saw how fruitful it was and how beautiful. The Jesuits have land here and convents and schools and are very rich. Mr. Alexander asked, 'Was there ever a Protestant school at Zachleh?' They said some missions had come here, but the priests and the Jesuits had excited their scholars against them and the children threw stones at the missionaries; but now we do not wish to allow any children to do so.'

"We stayed at the house of Abdullah the whole morning and many people came to us and all of them were asking us for a school. Another chief in Zachleh said he wished Mrs. Thompson very much to come, 'and I will give her all my house and my daughters to be her servants.' We went to the

ENCOURAGEMENTS

river, where we met some persons, who asked us, 'Is it true that you are to open a school? if so, we wish it to be soon.'

“The people are greatly changed. They want to be taught and say if Mrs. Thompson were coming, they would go out to meet her. We distributed books and tracts, which were well received and left Zachleh praising God that He had opened a way for the establishment of the Gospel.”

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA
CHAPTER 5

"JANUARY 27, 1862 - Our schools have been useful in giving an impetus to the education of females and I quite expect in the next generation it will not be the reproach of this country that the women are degraded, idle and ignorant. The thirst for instruction is extremely great and were it not for the love of money and the pernicious influence of the priests, *education* and not merely instruction, would be deemed essential and sought and paid for by the people themselves. But it is ours to sow in faith. The Greeks have now opened an industrial school and have got some of my best girls as helpers, to whom they give 100 piastres a month; they were very sorry to leave, but the money outweighed other advantages with the mothers, who are poor widows. The school is largely endowed by the Emperor of Russia.

"July 15, 1862 - Beirut is now deserted by the rich; the committee has closed their distributions of money and clothing; the Government no longer gives money for bread as heretofore and the people remain without work

RETURN OF THE FUGITIVES

or the probability of returning to Hasbeya or Damascus, by far the most important and populous districts. Some few have already returned to the Lebanon and we trust others may venture to gather in their olives and grapes; but there is *no* security. The Druses are all exempted from capital punishment and some are at large again upon the mountains. The Mohammedans offer great indignities to both men and women at Damascus; and were it not for the presence of the war steamers, we might expect a repetition of the scenes of horror and bloodshed. Damascus is indeed fallen and her daughters sit and weep; I also have been left alone."

BEIRUT, FEBRUARY 12TH, 1862

"Last week we had a gratifying instance of the value attached by our women to these schools. For three weeks we have been without any gifts or remittances for our women's schools; and the receipts for the work have been very small. I therefore told them how we were situated and asked them - would they accede to our plan for one month for one piastre a day, on condition that they had an extra hour for learning to read and write? The young women at once consented; the poor widows, some of whom have several children, thought this very hard and went to work at the French Jesuit Sisters, who paid them three times as much as we can afford; however, they made a trial - and some who stayed away a day or two came back and fell into our plan, saying they 'could not stop away from hearing the word of God, because they loved the Evangile.'

"I had no money in hand for my poor widows. They were without food; I could not taste my own dinner. I went into my room and besought the Lord to give me sonic means of helping them. While yet in prayer the excellent Prussian Consul called to tell me he had opened a soup kitchen and would give a meal every day to fifty of my poor women. Jehovah-jireh! I cannot tell

LOVE OF THE WORD

why the Relief Committee, which has such large funds in hand, does not give us a little help. In another six months these women will be able to earn more and then we shall be independent of charitable aid for our women's schools, except for the teachers."

BEIRUT, FEBRUARY 13TH, 1862

"Dr. Vandyke, who is making the new translation of the Old Testament, has requested me, as you will see by his note, to let him have twenty of your edition of the Bible, for the use of the native helpers, - who aid in the revision of the proof-sheets, - as it is important for them to have different versions to consult. I have a promise of some New Testaments from the Doctor by way of exchange in part.

"Last week, when your anxiously anticipated boxes of Bibles arrived, the women and children in our schools were eager to possess this treasure. When I told them I could only let them have them on their paying a part of their cost, many voices called out, 'Kadesh, kadesh' - how much, how much? 'Ten piastres' (1s. 8d.), I replied. A sorrowful look came over many a bright young face; but when I proposed receiving the amount in weekly payments of one penny, more than twenty gave in their names at once.

"On coming into the school today I found the women weeping: they had just heard that the Turkish Government had notified their resolution to stop the allowance of one piastre and a half per diem to the Hasbeyan refugees; and, further, that unless they returned to Hasbeya their indemnifications would be withheld. If this be so, their case is bard indeed; for how can they go back to their burnt homes and dwell among the murderers of their husbands and sons, many of whom have been enriched by their poverty? Well, the result was that women and children said that they must now go without the Bible, for they could not pay for it. Poor things! Their lot is hard and the Bible

INVITATIONS BY THE GREEKS

has now a power to comfort them they never felt before.

I will see the missionary about giving away some gratuitously to our own people who cannot pay."

BEIRUT, FEBRUARY 18TH, 1862

"Since I last wrote, telling you of Mr. B's visit, I have had three notes from him, naming different houses in his neighbourhood, belonging to different friends of his, all Greeks of property, who express an earnest desire that we would remove, the school to their quarter, in order that their young relatives might have the benefit of education. They also offer as an inducement to make a reduction in the rent. They have an antipathy to the Roman Catholics and this extends to their schools, while the growing influence of the Roman Catholics troubles them much. I said, 'You have your own Greek schools for girls.' They said these were only established since the opening of the English schools and that they were very inferior. They required European teachers and could not get any of the Greek religion. 'Besides,' one of the gentlemen added, 'we think the English religion must be the best, because the people speak the truth and are always straightforward in their actions.' I recommended the Prussian schools: they said the German language would be almost useless to them, whereas English was every day becoming more important. Every house we went to, the owners said, 'We will send our children to your schools and will gladly pay something.' In one of the principal houses we saw a panel-painting of the Virgin, with a lamp before it. I asked the lady why did she burn a lamp before the picture? She said she did not know. I answered, the Virgin, though she has eyes, could not see, whether it was lighted or not. She replied, 'Very true, but it is the custom and we have always done so.' I asked, if the house were to take fire, would the Virgin save her, or she the Virgin. She said of course she would save the Virgin. I asked, in that case who would be

CHRISTIAN WOMEN

the greater? She looked confused, told the children to go into another room and laughing said, 'You see I have never learnt.' The next day her husband called at the Institution, at the time of the opening prayer and listened at the outside, saying, 'Excellent! excellent!' I took him into Sara Sarkisse's room, where are many little children. They read and sang a hymn; and when one of the little girls offered him her hymnbook, he looked very foolish, rose up and left the schoolroom. 'Wonderful! wonderful! Such a young child to be able to read. I cannot read, do hope, madam, that you will come to our part of the town and I will send you my ten children.'"

BEIRUT, MAY 23RD, 1862

"In our women's school, which numbers a daily attendance of fifty, there are some in whose hearts the Holy Spirit's influence is clearly at work. Fudah Allah, our former teacher, has now been appointed as a sort of Bible reader, or Evangelist. He goes every evening to the house of one or other of the women of our school and these invite their neighbours, who come to hear. Lately some of the widows have had very severe persecution. The owner of the house of some of these women actually turned them out of the house, because of their prayers; so that they had to seek another dwelling; here, too, Seleme's mother is not allowed to have prayer. One of the women, Mart Mesa, of whom I have told you before that the Lord had opened her heart like that of Lydia, has a prayer-meeting one evening every week at her house. At the request of the women, I have allowed them the use of the great hall every Wednesday. The first Wednesday I was struck on seeing some very much overcome. The subject was 'judge not, that ye be not judged.' It had a great effect on their minds. One of them, in her simplicity, said, 'I wanted to cry badly, but I was ashamed to let the women see me cry, lest they should think that I was pious and I felt my heart did not feel half enough and thus I

should be a hypocrite.'

"The women and our teacher, Shehene, are now reading the rule of faith, with a view to their becoming members of the church. The two Bible-women have been hard at work and what I have told you of the nightly prayer-meeting may be traced to their great but unobtrusive work. Many of their neighbours come to hear the Bible and they go to different houses and also to the hospital, where they are welcomed by the poor sufferers and encouraged in their work by the Prussian sisters who have the charge of the hospital.

"I must now give you a brief account of the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to our establishment yesterday. His arrival at Beirut was some days sooner than was expected, as he did not first go to the cedars of Lebanon. At an early hour on Tuesday, 6th, all Beirut was on the move and no workmen to be had. It is calculated that not less than 60,000 persons went forth to welcome the Prince. They stood five or six deep along the Damascus road, as in an English crowd, while every spot, whence a glimpse could be obtained, was filled with people.

"Our women and children were ranged along the walls of our garden and in the new side school, all full of eager expectation.

"At last the Bourg, the Castle and the men-of-war fired a salute of twenty-one guns. Flying horsemen passed and soon the band announced his approach. Next came the mounted guard with their lances and then the Prince, accompanied by his suite, the Pashas and other dignitaries, followed by a regiment of cavalry.

"As soon as they reached the garden wall, we all struck up 'God save the Queen.' The women and children had learnt the tune to Arabic words. It evidently took the Prince by surprise. He bowed very graciously and, as he looked up at the long rows of little children, inquired what place it was. All

ROYAL VISIT

had a capital view and went home delighted.

“In the course of the next morning a message arrived to say that His Royal Highness would visit the school at four o'clock. Before the appointed time all was ready. Mr. Jessup kindly came to my assistance and was with me the whole time. I received the Prince at the covered archway, under the garden entrance. The Children were ranged under the trees along the avenue.

“The Prince said it gave him much pleasure to make this visit. He asked if all these children belonged to our schools, looking so pleased at the little things as he passed. When he reached the steps, he made a pause and looked at the group and now with one voice they all exclaimed in English, ‘God save the Queen,’ ‘Long live the Queen.’ The Prince then asked me to lead the way into the schools. I took him first to Saada’s school, where the women repeated some texts in Arabic and sang a verse of -

*‘How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
In a believer’s ear!’*

“The Prince then said he should like them to read a page in Arabic. They read the third of St. John, in alternate verses and he remarked that they read very fluently. They next read English, upon which the Prince inquired whether they understood what they read, or was it merely by rote? and we could assure him they really did understand. The needlework was next inspected, when we returned to the hall and looked at the table-cover for Lady C. Denison, at which the gold workers were employed and which the Prince admired. Saada whispered to me that her women were so disappointed the Prince had not examined their work. I ventured to tell him and His Royal Highness at once most graciously proposed returning to the women’s school, to see

DAMASCUS

their performance.

“He took some of their work in his hand and asked why they did not rather do the work of the country than English work. I said there was little demand for any native work and that our object was to teach them such work as would enable them to earn their bread. I told the Prince we had sent specimens of the gold embroidery to the International Exhibition, which appeared to give him much satisfaction.

“The women’s and children’s schools then all assembled in the large hall. There were so many, it was rather difficult to place them all so as to face the Prince. He inquired, ‘Were there any present that did not belong to our schools?’ I replied, there were not; on the contrary, all were not there. I told His Royal Highness that many had learnt not only to read in this school, but also to value the Bible and to know the power of prayer. It was delightful to hear the Prince speak so kindly and courteously. The schools then sang, -

*‘Around the throne of God on high,
Thousands of children stand;’*

after which the Prince, accompanied by his suite, took his leave. He shook hands and assured me of the pleasure it had given him to see the schools and that he hoped I felt satisfaction in seeing such fruits. “Next day His Royal Highness sent a gift of twenty-five Napoleons and also a large order for gold embroidery.”

In alluding to her visit to Damascus, during the Easter holidays of April, 1862, Mrs. Thompson writes: “About an hour before sunset we came in sight of Damascus - beautiful Damascus. Oh, how many thoughts did that city awaken in my breast!

We walked to the Christian quarter. It was a heart-rending sight.

DAMASCUS IN RUINS

In whatever direction we turned such desolation! Nothing but ruins met the eye. Every house nearly demolished - partly ruin, partly standing - beautifully decorated with marble, gilt, sculptures, mosaics and paintings, showing what they once were. We went past the convent of the Lazarists, which had only just been beautified at an enormous expense, now a heap of ruins. The most splendid of the Christian houses was that of Beit el Hamzeh, now one mass of desolation. The walls of the chief saloon and court are still standing. The sculpture is most exquisite and tasteful, but not much is left untouched. The finest specimens of art have been hacked and destroyed with a wanton hand and fragments of sculptured marbles and mosaics are lying about amidst heaps of rubbish. We passed through one street after another which for days and weeks were choked up with dead and putrifying bodies and where now you could plainly see the traces of blood on the walls and human bones among the heaps of dust over which we had to make our way. The Greek Church we could not get at, but a place close by was the refuge of hundreds, who were all put to death in cold blood. I felt sick with the sight and turning down another street, we saw a door with a stick passed through the knockers. It was the house of a Mohammedan, who invited the Christians to seek shelter under his roof. About twenty were thus concealed from the fury of the murderers; but ere night they were betrayed and a common butcher, with his hatchet and knife, slew every male under that roof. Shall not God be avenged on such a nation as this?"

During the summer of this year Mrs. Bowen Thompson visited her family, who were staying in Switzerland. They enjoyed together the splendid scenery of the valley of Chamouni and the beauties of the Rhine and she felt greatly invigorated by their walking excursions among the mountains. It was the last time the four sisters met. On returning to her now adopted Syrian home, she was accompanied by her sister, Miss Lloyd and in the following

VISITS SWITZERLAND

year was joined by her brother-in-law and sister, Mr. and Mrs. Mentor Mott, who entered warmly into the work and were thus, in the providence of God, training for their future service in the great Syrian Mission field.

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA
CHAPTER 6

MRS. BOWEN THOMPSON, in writing of a Mohammedan girl in her school, says:

February 7th, 1863 - The Mohammedan girl is making good progress and on Wednesday she brought her brother, to whom she had taught the alphabet and first spelling lesson at home. After school she also teaches two other little Mohammedan boys. I do trust she will be suffered to remain till she can read in the Testament; but being twelve or thirteen years old it is time for her to be shut up in the hareem. Our negro scholar has been absent, but is to return on Monday; so that we have really a mongrel school. Our upper girls' school numbers fifty-one; as the rainy season goes over, the number will be increased. The marvel is how children clad as they are can venture out under the pouring rain we have had; nothing daunts their ardour in coming to school. Alia Azar, speaking of her school, said she never knew the girls to quarrel now, or speak an unkind word; they were all so happy. Many of them

DRUSE GIRLS

loved prayer and she believed there was scarcely a girl in the school now who did not say her prayers before going to bed, while many were teaching their parents at home.

“March 7th, 1863 - Not only have we under Christian instruction the children of those who were butchered in cold blood, but the children also of those by whose order, if not by whose hand, multitudes were thus slain.

“Yes; the Druses, the very sound of whose name, not a twelvemonth since, excited such a commotion in our schools, are now sitting side by side with these same girls, learning the same Gospel and singing the same hymns of praise. For the last four months we have had the two daughters of a Druse Sheikh, who was condemned to death for his evil deeds, but was respited to banishment in Beirut.

“I took the girls for Maronite children and used to notice how unhappy and fretful they always looked; but I little suspected the cause. Their school-fellows, I found, knew who they were and seeing me treat these children like the rest, did the same. One day the father called at our institution and asked to see his two daughters; and when they went into the garden to their father, who remained mounted at the entrance, he, with Syrian generosity to girls, gave his daughters one penny each, to buy their dinner from a little shop kept by a Druse hard by.

“My first impulse was to notice these two young Druses and to bring them forward; but no, I felt it would at once draw attention to their parentage and standing. However, I resolved to pay an early visit to their mother and urge her to get the children into better habits and more respectably clothed. While the four sons of the Sheikh are dressed in cloth jackets richly worked in gold and always attended by a servant, these poor girls are in miserable cotton frocks, washed out and torn and sit shivering on the ground, with the rest of their class, eating their dinners of tough fiat bread and a few olives. I

EXAMINATION OF SCHOOLS

told the elder girl. I was sorry she was still in the spelling book and desired her to ask her father to hear her lessons of an evening and I was glad to be told that he often heard her read. Who can tell but that out of the mouth of these children some of the Druses may learn the truth?

“There are other Druses near and only three days ago one of them stopped me in the road and asked would I take in her little girl? Her mother brought her the next morning; but the child was frightened and had to be taken home again.

“*May 30th, 1863* - Mr. Selim Bustros came last Thursday and examined the women and children’s school for nearly two hours. I cannot tell you how astonished and delighted he was. He had known many of the Hasbeyans before the massacre and was amazed to find them in this school, neatly clothed, educated and in a better mind. He heard the girls read a chapter from Exodus in Arabic; Luke in English; also Arabic hymns, Geography, Arithmetic, first class in fractions, on the black board. They recited various pieces in English and then he examined their writing, both Arabic and English. He spoke to the girls, both individually and collectively and expressed his delight at what was being done in these schools and urged the girls to be diligent and punctual in their attendance. He and his cousins then came into the sitting-room; he said that he never expected to see his country-women so enlightened and begged I would remove the school nearer to the Greek aristocratic quarter, that the families round might send their daughters. He said he would do all he could to facilitate our getting a good house at a reduced rent and offered to build a school at a considerable reduction.

“*May 30th, 1863* - The blessing our women’s school has been to some, who have not been able to learn to read, in spite of their long-continued efforts, is now evidenced in Shehene’s old mother. She was with me before

the school opened and is the most aged of the widows. She has been sinking for some time, but would not see her danger and was angry when any one spoke of death. She was very fond of the school and it was touching to see the old spectacled grandmother, bereft of her husband and all her sons, sitting on the mat learning to sew, or repeating her A B C or text of Scripture.

When we called to see her yesterday, she said, 'Dear lady, I bless you for that school. I cannot sleep at night for the oppression on my chest; but those words I was so long in getting by heart [I think it was three months ere she could repeat them correctly] are always sounding in my ears, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."' It was affecting to see the old woman sitting upright on her mattress on the floor. She said she was a great sinner. I asked her did she not know the hymn 'Just as I am'? Her countenance brightened up and then she joined Shehene and me, with our faithful Gebour, in singing it. 'But there is one I love better, which we used to sing at school,' she said; and then she sung 'My faith looks up to Thee, Thou Lamb of Calvary.'

"It is of Beirut that the American missionaries remark, in their *'Monthly Notice of Missions in Western Asia,'* for the month of June: 'The missionary work here, though attended with many obstacles, is constantly assuming greater and greater importance. The population of the city is probably not less than seventy thousand. It is the mercantile capital of Syria and the talent and business energy of the country is rapidly concentrating here. A bank, a carriage road to Damascus, steamers plying to almost every country in Europe, telegraphic communication in several directions, numerous schools and hospitals and three printing-presses, make this place the commercial, religious, educational and charitable centre of Syria. The avidity with which the Bible is now sought after is one of the most cheering signs of the time. A few years since, every religious book printed at the Beirut Protestant press

was put under the ban by the papal clergy. Now, men of all sects buy school books, religious books and Bibles.’“

By way of illustration, we give some extracts from the simple journals of the Bible-women who had been trained by Mrs. Thompson:

“I went up to the second story of the khan,” says Em Yusuf. “Five women asked me to read to them. While I was reading, one of them asked me, ‘What was your first religion?’ I told her I was a Greek. She said, ‘Why are you become a Protestant?’ I told her I had read the New Testament; and now I felt I should like to show my sisters the way the New Testament teaches; for whatever it teaches us we ought to do. Then one woman asked, ‘Is it wrong to tell lies?’ I said, ‘Yes, it is;’ and read to them the fifth chapter of the Acts and they were afraid. After which left them and went to another place.”

Mrs. Thompson writes: “Mr. Samuel Hoare and his friends, who take a very warm interest in our schools, accompanied us one Sunday afternoon to this wretched khan and were much touched by the misery of the people - they quite felt with Sophia and myself, that some effort must be made for the poor children. The wish being frequently repeated and twenty-five children willing to come, after a few weeks all was prepared and a school called ‘The Olive Branch’ was opened on the day of the marriage of the Prince of Wales. The funds for commencing this school were contributed by the officers and men of H.M. ship Mars, who were all much interested in the work and frequently visited the institution. The Rev. Samuel Smith, of Lois Weedon and his lady, who had wintered in Beirut, likewise evince much sympathy in the new school and Mrs. Smith goes daily to teach the girls knitting.

“The room is very pleasant, clean and airy, twenty feet by fifteen, arranged with new benches and looking out upon an orange grove to the west, with a peep of St. George’s Bay and the Lebanon range to the north. The poor children are indeed ‘ragged’ to begin with; but their magnificent full black

eyes shone from beneath their dishevelled hair and torn and dirty mendilehs; (handkerchiefs worn over the head) and, just as they were, they attracted our hearts.

“Several neighbours came to see what it was all about and among them a curly-pated French boy of six years old. He begged hard to be admitted and so did his mother for him. She had not long since come from Lyons. The boy speaks French and Arabic, so we readily accepted him as a good little interpreter to lady visitors who do not understand Arabic.

“The mother took him home, speedily washed and combed him and he returned neatly clad and full of glee. ‘You may teach me English, French and Arabic - which you please,’ said the little man, I want to know them all.’

“The two Bible-women report incidentally the results of the teaching in the ragged-school, in some of their outdoor visits. A very poor man and his wife, who had often listened to Em Yusuf’s readings from the New Testament, begged very hard for a copy, which was given them. Some time afterwards she says: ‘The man to whom I gave the Testament seems very happy to possess it. He was not at home when I called; his wife said, ‘I thank you very much for that book. My husband reads it every evening. ‘Do you listen,’ said I, ‘when he reads?’ She answered, ‘Yes; but I do not understand him as I understand you.’ He has first to spell the words. He read to me in one place where it says, ‘Whosoever loves a son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me,’ and I was afraid, because I love my little daughter very much.’ I told her she had understood aright, that we must love Christ more than all.’ Another woman told Miriam Sarkisse, the second Bible-woman that she was very glad to be visited and to be taught about the salvation of her soul. She mentioned her little boy, how thankful and surprised she was to see that he knew the way to be saved. ‘One day a neighbour talked to him and bade him pray to Mar Elias (Elijah) to intercede for him. The boy said, ‘I

shall not ask Mar Elias, but I ask one greater than he - Jesus. Mar Elias cannot hear me; he is in heaven. He is not here and everywhere, but Jesus is here and everywhere. He can hear me when I call, because He is the Son of God and He said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' A second mother told me that her little girl said to her, 'Mother, I cannot work to get money for our Tamuyat (Missionary Association), but I want twenty paras every week for it. Mother, I will stay today without dinner, if you will give me twenty paras (1½d.) and I will give it to our Mission.'"

The following long and interesting communication from Mrs. Thompson narrates her first visit to Hasbeya and the founding of the schools there, the most important off-shoot of her work at Beirut.

"September 15th, 1863 - In my former letter I stated the perplexity of the poor widows of Hasbeya, in consequence of the order for their return home, given out by the Bishops in the Creole and Maronite churches, on penalty of forfeiting the ordinances of the Church. The poor women were much troubled. How could they return, broken-hearted and alone, to their desolate dwellings, in the very place where their husbands had been murdered? And yet the expense of living at Beirut is so great, that not a few have already expended upon rent and food the indemnification that was given them to rebuild their houses. Besides, after a while it might be difficult to identify their own houses, as any one who has not stones enough to re-build his house may take any he needs from the adjoining ruins.

"Some of the women went to Hasbeya last month to gather in the olives and grapes and see what could be done about building up their desolate homes; but, alas they have no one there to help or advise them, or even procure materials. Then, too, they will be without employment when the gleaning is over. Many of the women urged upon me to transfer the women's school to Hasbeya and to open a girls' school, so that they might continue to

DAWN ON HERMON

enjoy the spiritual and temporal advantages to which most of them had been strangers when they came to Beirut.

"I found it very difficult to arrive at anything like a definite idea of what was to be done, without seeing the place, or having some guarantee from those in power that the schools would be protected in case of any future outbreak.

"I had "been anxious to execute this trip while my dear sister was with me; but she had to leave so suddenly that I did not set out till Monday, 14th, in company with Miss F, our teacher Georgius and his brother, Gebour.

"*September 25th* - We were absent only ten days and a half and reached home in perfect health and safely, though much fatigued. I will give you a brief outline of our journey. Monday, 14th, we started, at two p.m., for Deir el Kamar, which we reached before sunset and stayed the night at Colonel and Mrs. Meason's. The town has been re-built since the massacres and presents a very interesting picture; but, as you pass through the deserted streets, you see scarcely a single man and the poor widows dirty, untidy and wretched. On the opposite side of the valley lies the Druse village of Baklin and against this village the mothers make their tiny children level their sticks as mock guns and curse the Druses and their fathers and grandfathers. Up to this time no Druse has been allowed to pass through Deir el Kamar; but since Daoud Pasha is anxious to revive the silk manufacture and commerce of the Deir, it is probable that the Druses will be gradually introduced again, as they are the purchasers and promoters of the trade.

"The next morning we went to the seraglio, where those who had taken refuge had been slain and where their bodies had lain about in the palace, churches, houses and streets for months, till the French arrived; when those who had not been eaten by the dogs and jackals were buried in a large piece of ground close by the seraglio.

“At ten we set off for Mokhtara, the palace of the late Said Beg, the most picturesque and beautiful place you can imagine, as seen midway up the mountain on the other side of the valley. After being welcomed by the widow of Said Beg, her eldest son, Najeeb Beg, took us over the palace and the Sitt begged very earnestly that we would prolong our stay till the morrow; and as we could not arrange that, made us promise to visit her on our return. We had to accomplish the greater part of our journey, four hours, to Jezin, in the dark, passing along the narrow ledges of the rock and down steep precipices, with much anxiety. We found our tents ready pitched on the banks of the beautiful Owly and next morning visited the cave and cataract of Fukhr ed Din, which flows over a perpendicular precipice of 250 feet. That evening we reached Deir Mimas, where we were cordially welcomed by our kind friends Mrs. Ford and Mr. and Mrs. Eddy, American missionaries and visited with them the lofty Saracen castle of Shukkif. Georgius had much interesting conversation with some Metualis, who expressed great delight on my giving them a copy of the Psalms and the Gospel of St. John, with some tracts, in Arabic. They begged I would send them a Bible.

“On Thursday morning, Mr. Eddy accompanied us to Tel el Kadi, Baniyas and the sources of the Jordan. Here it was that the golden calf was set up, or rather close by. The scenery is lovely and long could we have lingered here, dwelling on the holy associations of the river; but leaving this spot we proceeded to the ancient castle of Baniyas, 2,300 feet above the Mediterranean. The ascent is really fearful; rough, steep and, as you near the gates, the path is so narrow, that a false step or unsteady rein would send you quickly down a yawning precipice. However, we were well repaid and, in descending, trusted to our own feet.

“*Friday night* - I am very weary, but must hasten to the little village of Ain Kamyreh. Here we found our tent prepared; but, instead of getting any repose,

crowds of women and children gathered round us; but, oh! so fearfully ignorant. They scarcely seemed to know that God had made them and, in answer to our questions, 'What would become of them after they were dead?' they said, 'How should we know? We are Arabs, we are women.' Georgius spoke very plainly with them, but none could answer the simplest question. 'Who was the first man?' 'In how many days had God made the world?' 'How should we know? We are like the cows, we know nothing.' The missionary and native preacher were engaged in talking with the men; and when we had separated after dinner, most anxious for a little repose, the women and children came again and asked, 'would we open a school for them?' They begged Georgius would again read the Gospel to them and so earnest were they in their entreaty, that we forgot our fatigue; and the women and children squatting on the ground near the tent door, Georgius read Luke 15. and applied it to them. Oh, how riveted were their looks! And the little children listening with the greatest attention. Suddenly we heard a voice behind us, saying, Sahih, sahih!' (true, true); and on looking up, what was our amazement at seeing glistening eyes peering in all round the roof of the tent! The men, too, had come to listen and long did they talk with Georgius. In the morning we went to the house of the only Protestant in the place and Mr. Eddy told us that thirty-five men had put their names to a request for a school.

"But I must hasten through Caesarea Philippi to Rasheyah el Fokhar, where there are many Protestants, who, since their stay at Sidon and elsewhere, have learnt to value the Bible and are trying to build a little church, one giving the ground, another some stones and a third several days' work. They said, 'Would friends in England give us a helping hand?'

"We then proceeded to Hasbeya, taking Hibhariyeh in our way. Here is a very fine temple of Baal; indeed, the region of Dan abounds in idolatrous temples.

“As we neared Hasbeya, my heart grew very sad; but, as we came in sight of the seraglio and of the unroofed desolate houses that line both sides of the narrow valley, I began to realize something of the sad story.

“As soon as we reached our tent, which was pitched close to the house of Custa the Protestant teacher, who is placed here by the liberality of the little native Missionary Society of Beirut, several of our scholars came to welcome us; and we learned that others had arrived to gather in their olives and grapes, but that few seemed to know whether to stay or to go back to Beirut. ‘We must have hearts of stone,’ they said, ‘to stay; and yet how can we give up our little property here?’ And, indeed, the very ashes of the dwelling where their husbands and fathers lived, seemed to rivet them to the spot. But, ah! what pen can describe the utter ruin, desolation and misery of Hasbeya, once the largest and most prosperous village of the Lebanon! Accompanied by Shehene and Custa the Protestant teacher, we walked round the town to the seraglio and with the list of some of our poor children in our hand we went over the ruins to identify their former homes. Others, of course, joined us and as we proceeded our guide exclaimed, ‘This is Alia’s house, this is Anise’s, this Selmi el Houri, this Saada’s and this the large house of the Ghobreens.’ All were in ruins, save that the walls were standing; but these, in many instances, were burnt or cracked half-way down and everywhere you had to make your way over heaps of rubbish and here and there a skull or human bones.

“At the head of the village is the seraglio, to which the people fled for safety, but where they were butchered like sheep, while down the valley was the long, once busy bazaar, all in ruins; not a shop, not a door remaining, only the unroofed walls. The men who had been the life of this bazaar and lived in these shops, were, with few exceptions, all murdered in the castle. If you asked, ‘Whose shop is this?’ and ‘Where is he?’ the answer in nine cases out

HASBEYA

often would be, 'He was murdered in the castle.'

"As we proceeded through the masses of ruins we, were greeted by the Arabic invitation, 'Ta fadol' ('Come in - welcome!') and many were the embraces from poor, dirty, wretched-looking women. Some who had remained at Hasbeya ever since those awful scenes looked half-scared and wild and invited us into their tumble-down houses to eat of the bruised wheat or grapes, that there might be a blessing on the house.

"Some had seen us before in the hospital, others had heard of the Refuge School for these Hasbeyans, while at every turn we met some child and here and there a woman, who had been under our care. By the time we entered the Maronite church it was growing dusk and all within was darkness. On hearing strange voices, a poor blind man who was lying in a corner got up and shouted at us in a voice of alarm and anger. At the farther end of this large edifice was a glimmering light and round it were sitting some fifteen or twenty women and children and two or three men, eating their miserable evening meal of dry bread and some husks and vegetables stewed in oil. They begged us to sit down and partake of their supper; but had I been starving I do not think I could have eaten a morsel of the meal. Here, too, our hearts were refreshed by a little girl who laid her hand on my arm and said, 'I have been in your school.' Oh, what distinguishing grace is ours! We have been taught and made partakers of the Saviour's gift of eternal life and enjoy such rich blessings and comforts in the life that now is, while these poor people are left in darkness and misery.

"There was here an illustration I can never forget of the psalmist's lament, 'I am left alone, as a sparrow upon the house-top.' Amid the masses of ruined houses, not far from the delapidated bazaar, on one of the tumble-down roofs, sat an aged widow on a low stool, with a little earthen pot of charcoal before her. Her hands were folded on her knees and she sat motionless as

A GIRL'S SCHOOL AT HASBEYA

a statue. By her side was a little sort of wigwam, not high enough for her to stand upright in; and under this miserable shelter the poor widow sleeps, bemoaning the dead and, without hope for the future,

'Seeks a nightly shed and weeps till morn.'

"Dear friends, you have done so much to feed, clothe, comfort and teach the poor fugitives, when they had to flee from their burning houses and leave the blood of their husbands and sons behind them; give them a helping hand now that one by one they find their way back to their mountain village and seek in many instances to build up their broken-down walls with their own hands.

"In the full conviction of the support of my many loving Christian friends, I decided to stay another day at Hasbeya and devote it to ascertain, first, the need of an industrial school and secondly, the countenance which I should be likely to receive from those in power.

"Of the need there was no doubt; but to make matters certain, I sent one of our women, Hamde, Saada Baraket's widowed sister, to ascertain how many of our children had returned and what others would be glad to avail themselves of a school. While we were yet at breakfast a woman came from the palace, bringing with her two lovely little girls, the grand-daughters of the Emir, Said ed Been, who was beheaded, as you will remember, at the massacre, saying that, having heard I was going to open a school, their mother had sent them to know if I would receive them and, further, begged I would call at the seraglio.

"Accompanied by Custa and Mr. Aristides, the Greek surgeon attached to the Turkish army, we called first on Hassam Bey, the military governor. He had been informed of my intention and received us most graciously. I told

GOVERNMENT PROTECTION

him that the school could not be established unless we had some guarantee of protection from the authorities of Hasbeya, civil and military, Turks and Druses. He said it would be for the welfare of all parties if a school for women and girls could be opened, to which the Mohammedans and Druses, as well as Christians, had access and farther expressed his readiness to help and countenance the work and protect the women. He then introduced us to his Turkish wife and only daughter, a girl of fifteen, who had been married only a few months; otherwise both she and her father would have been very glad for her to have come to school.

“We next went to the seraglio. I dare not trust myself here to speak of my feeling in going over the courts and rooms which had been stained with so much precious blood and whose walls had resounded with the cries and supplications if so many now in our schools and of those belonging to them. Poor Custa shuddered as he passed: his son had been slain there; and had it not been to accompany me on such an errand, he could not have come.

“We were first of all introduced to the Emir Achmet, son of the unfortunate Said ed Deen and we sat down in the room where he was beheaded by the Druses, who hated him and threw his head out of the very window at which we stood to look upon the ruins of Hasbeya. The Emir at once sent a messenger for the ladies, who had all gone out to pay a visit; and soon we saw ten females, wrapped up in the white izaras or sheets, wending their way from the upper part of the town down to the seraglio. On their arrival the Emir Achmet and his young son-in-law withdrew and the ladies entered. They gave us a most cordial welcome and hailed the prospect of a school. They spoke of the massacre, their deliverance by Sitt Naify, the demolition of the seraglio and the misery and sadness of Hasbeya ever since.

“Two of the ladies had been taught to read and these were anxious

HASBEYA

to learn more and have their children instructed. They promised every encouragement and help in their power and would at once send the younger girls to the school, which I engaged to open the next morning.

“Thus the Gospel will be put into the hands of these Mohammedans, the first family of the Shahabs in Syria, the direct descendants of the mighty Saladin.

“Our next visit was to Sitt Naify. She was absent near Mokhtara, on a visit to her second daughter; we saw her eldest daughter, the Sitt Howla, wife of Seleem Beg. She said she felt sure her mother would protect and encourage the school. She herself had been taught to read by Costa and would like to improve herself in sewing and promised to send her little girl.

“Having thus secured the good-will of both Mohammedans and Druses, I engaged a neat room, ordered it to be whitewashed and new mats laid down and appointed Hamde schoolmistress for the present. Before I could leave she had the names of fifty girls.

“I further appointed Nachlé, our former Bible-woman at Beirut, who is now living at Hasbeya with her husband, to act as Bible-woman here, an arrangement to which she gladly responded.

“Before leaving Hasbeya, I must not forget to mention that on Sunday Custa had services twice at his house. In the morning the native preacher from Rasheyah came over and in the afternoon there was a Sunday-school. On Monday, Custa had between sixty and seventy boys, Christians and Druses and some girls whom he is teaching with great care and success.

“Jacob, Custa and others, said that if our women could knit stockings and make garments such as are worn by the native men, there would be a ready sale for these articles at the monthly fairs held in the neighbourhood and that they would promote it.

“With a heart full of gratitude we left Hasbeya and ascended Mount

MOUNT HERMON

Hermon on Tuesday morning. We gained the summit before noon, lunched among the ruins of the temple of Baal, looked in admiration on the wide-spread view before us - the Hauran at our feet watered by the sparkling Pharpar; in the distance, Damascus, surrounded by its verdant gardens; to the north, Baalbec; to the west, Tyre and Sidon; and southward, the most beloved of all places on the earth, the lake of Galilee.

“We could have lingered long, but it was cold and we had before us a ride of four or five hours. In descending we came to a gorge, in which lay a large track of deep sparkling white snow and just before us a brown bear, whose traces were distinctly visible on the snow and who, on the men shouting loud, walked off to his den, while two eagles at the same moment hovered in the clear blue sky above.

“By the time we reached our night quarters at Rasheya el Wady we were glad to rest our weary limbs in the tent ready prepared for us. But no; before we had time so much as to eat bread, the people came to see us. The schoolmaster, Moosé, who has lately been appointed by the Rev. Mr. Crawford from Damascus, told us there are now forty Protestant families, *i.e.* people who have left the Greek Church and are seeking instruction. Mr. and Mrs. Crawford’s tent had been pitched, for several weeks, on the very spot we now occupied and within the last three weeks, I think, they had opened a boys’ school. Moosé told us the Protestants all begged to come up and see and speak with us. However, we arranged to go down to Moosé’s house, where we found the room filled with men, women and children: Georgius read Luke 15. and after showing the love of Christ in seeking out His sheep and giving them eternal life, he invited them to come to Jesus. He then prayed and after singing a hymn we rose to leave. But no; the women would have a promise that we would open a school for them and the girls. We said it was impossible; but this would we do: As we had now many of the

children of this village and the neighbouring villages of Dahr el Achmar in the Olive-Branch School, we would endeavour to bring on one or two of the cleverest as pupil teachers. Should this suggestion approve itself to the heart of some friend in England, to provide the twelve pounds annually required for her board and maintenance, we will not fail, God helping us, to carry out this plan.

“On Wednesday early we started for Mokhtara, a long and in many places most difficult and steep rocky journey. We came round by Dahr el Achmar and were kindly received, on arriving before sunset at Mokhtara, by Mr. Robson. The widow of Said Beg prepared sleeping apartments in her palace. Her two sons were very glad to see us again and next morning took us into their schoolroom, showed us their books, read a little English and then took us to the boys’ and girls’ schools, supported by some kind lady at Liverpool. The Sitt was much pleased with our plans for Hasbeya and said, since her husband’s misfortunes, she took no part in these matters, but thought Sitt Naify would. We accordingly rode to the house of Emir Abdullah, whose wife, Sitt Naify’s daughter, had lately rejoiced the family by the birth of a son. After passing through a range of passages, doors and stairs, we were ushered into a large neat apartment, where was the celebrated Sitt Naify and on the floor her daughter and infant on a neat mattress.

“After our explaining the object of our visit, she said she hoped there would never be any disturbance again at Hasbeya; that she would encourage and protect such a school and thought it was calculated to do much good. She knew many of the women and girls in our schools, was surprised to hear they could now read and sew and said she would be very glad if Saada Baraket and her sister Shehene could have the charge of these schools. She made many most intelligent inquiries, entered fully into the proposed locality for the school and said that if commenced now it could

be ready for the winter, when the women have no work. She thought the house belonging to Saada's family would be very central and that, if the indemnification would not suffice to build up more than half, that the plan of our paying, say, one hundred pounds would enable them to rebuild the whole and that we could secure our outlay by retaining the use of four large rooms for the schools for eight or ten years till the capital was paid, after which I propose to pay rent.

"What I would now ask is, if the plan commends itself to the judgment of our friends in England, that they would raise, say, one hundred pounds towards the new schoolhouse, which would secure it for eight years and about fifty pounds more to fit it up with benches, closets, tables and stores for work. We shall at once require knitting cotton and needles, worsted, coarse unbleached calico, spinning-wheels, etc.

"If we could have, say, thirty women in the schools and the rest have work at their own homes and come merely for two hours a day to learn reading; and an efficient school for girls under the care of some of our Hasbeyan teachers, it would be a great blessing and Hasbeya may yet become a city set on a hill in the midst of the darkened villages around and send forth the light of that Gospel which she has now for three years received through your kindness to those who are sitting in the very shadow of death. May God in His mercy incline the hearts of my dear friends to help in this glorious cause.

"Yours sincerely and affectionately,

ELIZABETH MARIA THOMPSON

The following extract from the Editor's journal a year afterwards shows the effect already produced by the establishment of these schools, though the writer at the time was unacquainted with the details of the work there and had not an opportunity of visiting the schools:

HASBEYAN SCHOOL

FROM REV. H. B. TRISTAM'S ACCOUNT OF HERMON

“Even out of this fearful atrocity (the massacre of Hasbeya) Providence has brought some good. Many of the Hasbeyan widows and orphan-girls fled to Beirut and were rescued from death by the charity of a devoted Christian lady, Mrs. Bowen Thompson, who has established the well-known Syrian schools there, in which 600 pupils are under instruction. This good work, by its very nature expansive, stopped not with Beirut itself. Mrs. Thompson was led, from her interest in the orphans of Hasbeya, to extend her schools thither and to gather together, under a teacher of her own training, the poor desolate women left in their native place. The branch has taken root; the charity shown to their relations in the hour of their deep distress has opened their hearts, till numbers have become willing learners and ready workers.

“Hardly had our tents been pitched, when they were surrounded by poorly clad but clean-looking women, in the simple native dress of the Christians, with the snow-white ‘mandil’ of calico thrown over their heads and hanging down behind, as we see in the old pictures of the Marys at the Sepulchre. They eagerly offered for sale the skull-caps of white cotton, stitched in many designs, which are the industry of the place; and still more surprised us by inquiring if we had any clothes to wash. We soon found that the benefits of Mrs. Thompson’s education descended to the very practical details of every-day life; and when I told them that Sitt (Mrs.) Thompson was a dear friend of mine, many clapped their hands for joy and invoiced blessings on her head. Soon a merry group was seated under the lee of our tent, in the shade and set to work, needles in hand, to overhaul our tattered and travel-torn wardrobes; and nowhere was our supply of English needles more eagerly sought for than by these industrious mountaineers. They were very different in features and expression from the Mohammedan inhabitants of the plains. Their Syrian blood and keen mountain air gave them an European cast of countenance and their Christian education spoke out in their bright intelligent faces.

We spent a quiet Sunday here. The Lord’s-day was devoutly observed by the

HASBEYAN SUNDAY

native Christians and a large congregation was gathered in the new mission church, which the American Board had very recently repaired and which was supplied by a native teacher, who called upon us in the afternoon and gave us an interesting report of his work and his people. Today the needles were laid aside and none came to solicit work, save a few Maronites."

In the spring of 1864, Mrs. Thompson accompanied her sister and Mr. Mott in a tour in the Holy Land.

The following extract from Mrs. Mott's journal, "The Stones of Palestine," illustrates her ever ready presence of mind. In crossing the Plain of Esdraelon they were benighted and the guides losing their way compelled them to trust to a party of Arabs from the notorious village of Hattin. Mrs. Mott says, "We re-mounted our horses, led by these mysterious strangers. There passed a peculiar call from mouth to mouth and from place to place - something thrillingly frightful. Elizabeth overheard their conversation and told us we had fallen into bad hands. One party was evidently urging on another to some deed, to which he replied, 'I am afraid.' 'Why is that man afraid?' asked Elizabeth; 'is he afraid of the wolves? I have no fear of them.' The men, finding she could understand them, said the 'call' was a watchword to let their people know that strangers were coming. It was midnight when we reached Hattin, wending our way down the rough mountain pass. Here a number of men, above a dozen, were lying down; they started to their feet, threw off their Arab cloaks and made a movement with their weapons. One of our guides now had a close consultation with their chief - literally a *tête-a-tête*, for they had their faces close together, drawing their hoods over each other's head. Meanwhile Elizabeth, with her usual tact, had asked for their wives and though it was so late a nice young woman came out. Elizabeth, who had previously inquired her name, addressed her familiarly as

IN BAD HANDS

‘Ischi,’ and told her we wanted *lebban*, a delicious thick sour milk and begged her to give us some. After parleying with the men, Ischi brought us butter, or more properly buttermilk, or *lebban*, ‘in a lordly dish.’ Now we knew that we were safe; for, having once shared their hospitality, they are bound to defend, *not* to injure.”

1864 - 1865

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA

CHAPTER 7

IN the year 1864, one darling wish of Mrs. Thompson's heart was accomplished and the purchase of the site and buildings of the schools was completed, the freehold being legally made over to trustees. Her schools had now increased to eight, numbering more than 400 scholars, besides schools at Ashrafia, Hasbeya and other places, with above 200 pupils.

The schools had now become known to all travellers in the East and were visited by every one who took the slightest interest, not only in the advancement of the Gospel, but in the elevation and amelioration of the condition of the races subject to the Turkish rule.

It was in the year 1863 that the editor of this memoir first became personally acquainted with Mrs. Thompson's work. First Impressions are generally more vivid than reminiscences and he therefore makes no apology for simply extracting from his journal, afterwards published, the remarks he noted down on the spot, in October 1863:

"While speaking of education, I must not omit to mention what was to me by far the most interesting sight in Beirut, the female schools established and conducted by Mrs. Bowen Thompson. Here nearly 400 native females, married women, girls and infants, are receiving a sound, useful and thoroughly Christian education. Nowhere has the experiment of female education in the East been tried with more thorough success and nowhere has it been conducted on more uncompromising and undisguised Christian principles. Nor is it merely that outcasts are taken in and orphans such as those from the massacre of Hasbeya received and clothed; a very large proportion of the scholars in Mrs. Thompson's various rooms are the children of the wealthiest families in Beirut, who pay for their education at a liberal rate. In one large schoolroom we heard the third class, of about forty girls, examined in the Scriptures, Arabic reading, English recitation, singing and a small class in French. Their countenances bespoke a variety of origin, the Greek type prevailing; but all beamed with intelligence. All the races of Syria were represented. A very pretty child at the head of the class attracted us by the symmetry and intellectual expression of her features and on inquiry we found her to be the daughter of an Englishman and Syrian mother. Next to her was a beautiful dark-eyed young Jewess, the daughter of one of the wealthiest merchants in the place. Next to her were the daughters of a Greek priest and among the others was a Moslem girl. Many of the class were wild-looking children, with bright restless eyes, the orphans of the massacre of Hasbeya, fed and clothed by English subscriptions. The classes were catechized in both English and Arabic, by the visitors, on what they had read; and answered in both languages well and intelligently.

"We afterwards visited the rooms where the married women are taught embroidery and also those in which they sit on plain ottomans round the room, learning to sew, while a teacher read the Scriptures aloud, or where some of them were taught to read for themselves.

"Mrs. Thompson has so far succeeded in conciliating the confidence of the people

DESCRIPTION OF SCHOLARS

that even in these classes were mingled the wives of Christians, Jews and Moslems. One of my friends offered to take photographs of some of the classes and several groups were accordingly selected on a subsequent day, to their great delight and arranged, in their best and most gorgeous clothes, for the occasion. Of course the married women would not sit themselves, but were proud of their daughters being selected for the compliment. Most of them had their heads covered with gold coins worked on velvet, caps and frontlets; several had massive necklaces of gold bugles and large heavy gold fetters for bracelets. One little Jewess had head-dress, necklace and brooch of gold, pearls and fine diamonds. The daughter of a distinguished Druse Sheikh, who had just been betrothed at the age of fourteen, was arrayed in a long cassock frock, without waist, of crimson satin and gold tissue, covered all over with gold coins and spangles; yet, in spite of the metal that she bore, she was a pretty, attractive-looking girl, whom no dress could disfigure. All had lace veils and embroidered handkerchiefs; and at length a group was selected, which for variety and contrast of costume, beauty and feature, would have delighted any artist.

"The attainments of all the classes in Mrs. T.'s school were very satisfactory and her success is a conclusive answer to those who would object to the attempt to combine Christianity with secular education in mission work. Mrs. Thompson could not have been more successful had she not made religion her first aim in instructing her pupils and the prejudice of the Oriental is not against Christian education, but against any education for women.

"Mrs. Thompson is proving to them that educated women make better daughters and more valuable wives and on this account they suffer them to be taught by her; and who shall say what influence may be attained, in a generation or two, by the descendants of women brought up to teach their children to read the Scriptures and to act with truthfulness and energy in the affairs of domestic life! The effects of practical Christianity brought to the very hearths and homes of Orientals by those that dwell within the hidden circle as wives and mothers, must be very different from

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

that produced by intercourse with mere strangers, be they even missionaries or friends bound by the ties of interest or affection.

"The men who will today send their children to sit by the side of those of hostile creeds and learn from the Book of Life; can scarcely hereafter be unwilling to surrender themselves to the influence of its teaching, when enforced upon them by daily practice of the nearest and dearest in their own families."

To this I can only add, that the experience of all those who have studied the question in the East seems to coincide with the testimony of our missionaries in India, that the natives neither fear nor dislike the inculcation of Christianity in our schools and will as readily send their children to a religious as to a secular seminary, so long as they are not compelled to change their faith; and that the liberty of conscience objection is a mere phantom of Western politicians, as hollow and false as the cry of the Birmingham Education League at home.

Miss Whately, visiting the schools some months after the editor's first visit, in July, 1866, writes thus to the committee:

"I had heard much of the schools before arriving at Beirut, but was surprised as well as delighted at what I saw and heard. Of the admirable arrangements of the schools and the numbers of the children who flock to them, you must have heard through many; but most of the passing travellers who stop at Beirut for a day or two would be able to appreciate only the English part of the instruction and also, if not engaged in foreign mission work themselves, would only in a degree estimate the difficulties Mrs. Thompson has had to contend with. As a labourer in a field somewhat resembling hers and acquainted in some degree with the Arabic language, I could form a tolerably clear estimate both of the work and its success. Mrs. Thompson has been blessed with a power of choosing and selecting for



A GROUP IN A BRITISH SYRIAN SCHOOL AT BEIRUT

MRS. WHATELY'S ACCOUNT

their several posts fitting agents; and where trained teachers were unattainable, of training them for their duties; and perhaps no talent is more valuable in a missionary superintendent than this, unless it be that love of souls without which all mission work is languid and cold. Her work is glorious and very few have her talent for organization. Without undervaluing other and earlier efforts, I think none have been so quickly blessed as Mrs. Thompson's."

We will now continue our extracts from Mrs. Thompson's diary.

"*May 28th, 1864* - One of our pet children an orphan girl from Hasbeya, the granddaughter of a Greek priest who likes her read the Bible to him every night, has just gone to Tyre to stay for three months with her grandmother, whom she has not seen since the massacres. She is about eleven; a gentle, pretty girl and very clean.

"At parting I gave her two Arabic Testaments, three copies of St. John's Gospel and the Psalms, as she had promised me that she would try and teach some girls at Tyre. I said, 'I hope you will never forget what you have learnt at school, but will try and teach others.' She blushed deeply and said, 'I like very much to teach others.' One of her schoolfellows, who was standing by, said, 'Oh, yes, she likes very much to teach others. When she was at Zachleh last summer with her mother, she used to teach a great many, not only little children, but some that were very big; and she taught the schoolmistress too, because she could not read well and did not know as Helené does.'

"We have twenty-four Jewish children in our Olive-Branch School, who read the New Testament, as well as the five books of Moses and the Psalms; and have learnt several Christian hymns, such as 'Jesus, I my cross have taken.' The other day, while teaching them some texts, I said to the girl next me I would give her a short one, namely, John xiv. 6. She omitted the name of Jesus. Her teacher observed in English, 'She never says that name, she is a Jewess.' I took no notice and taught her the words, 'I am the way, the

truth and the life,' which she learnt very readily. I asked her to repeat the Ten Commandments, which she could not do; and when I called upon the Christian girls to repeat them, she looked quite amazed.

"I find the Jewish girls so ready of comprehension and so anxious to be taught, that, independent of my predilection for them, I feel it is an advantage, yea, a blessing, to have Israelitish maidens among our pupils. You can scarcely conceive how harshly the Christians of every denomination think and speak of them; and therefore to get them to live together in harmony would be a triumph of love.

"Our numbers have been rather fluctuating lately, on account of the Greek Easter, the Jewish Passover and other feasts. The fact is, before Easter, many Roman Catholic and Greek children are taken from the Protestant schools, because the priests will not give absolution or the Holy Communion to the parents of any children attending them. Hence, the poor children, in spite of their entreaties, are kept away at such times; but after a while they almost imperceptibly step into their places again. A Greek priest, who was once opposed to the school, brought, back his little grandchild this week and right happy were we all to welcome home our little favourite. He said he was a Greek Catholic, yet perhaps there was none who rejoiced more in the welfare of our schools than he did. He saw the vast change it had already wrought, in women and girls and was glad that the Bible was taught so extensively. He came to beg that I would allow little blind Hishvie, one of our infant-school children, to live in the house with me; and if I could not find room, he would like to place her with the Prussian Deaconesses. How striking this, when the French Catholic Sisters are so anxious to receive them! I know not what will become of little Hishvie. We have no place for her and the Deaconesses are full.

"If we have our trials, we have also our encouragements. On Thursday

AISHÉ'S MARRIAGE

the Kawass of the Greek Patriarch called upon me on business. He is a very fine-looking Mohammedan and well to do in the world. He has sought Aishé in marriage and the wedding is to take place shortly. I spoke to him of Aishé and said she was a good girl and that I loved her much. He said he knew it and it was because she had been in my school and could read and was so different to other girls, that he had chosen her. He said, 'Aishé is a poor girl, but she can read and sew; I shall therefore give her all her clothes; I shall buy her gold bracelets and necklaces and stuff to make her new gowns.' I observed that Aishé was fond of her Bible and that I hoped he would allow her to read it. He looked full of amazement and said, 'Of course; why I am going to marry her because she can read and I have seen her teach little children.' He begged I would honour the wedding with my presence and often come to see them."

We extract the following from the *Missing Link Magazine* for September, 1865. The article is by Mrs. Thompson herself.

"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 help-meet for man. We no longer hear the taunt of the Syrian of former days, 'You might as well teach a cat as a woman.' Nor do you now often hear (except in remote mountain districts) their plea for ignorance: 'We are women; how should we know? We are like the cows; we know no more than the oranges over our heads; all we know is that we die like the sheep.' The various plans suggested by Christian benevolence to alleviate the misery, want and sorrow of the Syrian widows and orphans, have tended in a striking manner to change the face of female morals and female influence. 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 others, who have grown up in ignorance. Many such instances could be adduced, but two or three are enough to prove the fact. One of the first of these was a dear little child in the infant school: unknown to her teachers, this little girl had mastered the first four chapters of St. John's Gospel, by rising before daylight and studying her sister's book before she got up and would require it herself; and not only so, but what, she had thus learned, she went after school to read to a bed-ridden neighbour. One more instance of the Christian influence of a little Syrian girl in the English school will encourage friends in England to sow the seeds of the Gospel in that land with a more liberal hand than they have yet done. A very poor man and woman, with a family of six young children, five of whom were girls, entreated me to take the eldest girl as a boarder into the house. After a few weeks the parents came gratefully acknowledged the benefit their child was receiving, but begged to have her back: 'We cannot live without her, we cannot read she always read the Bible to us every evening and some of our neighbours used to come in and then she prayed and she and her little sisters sang their hymns; our child is such a comfort, we beg you to let her come home every evening to read and pray with us.'

"Many ladies even of the highest ranks can boast of no higher attainments than dress, adorning their heads and smoking their narghiehies. Such, however, is their wonderful quickness, that even the scantiest training and instruction produces a change. While at Zachleh, we paid a visit to the ladies of the family of an Effendi. They were all reclining on the divan, smoking or idling, except one, a fine young woman, who was seated on the ground with a quantity of white calico beside her and several paper patterns, fitting and cutting out some garments. She looked up with a sweet smile, exclaiming, 'Ah, dear lady, I learnt to work when I was in your schools and now I am come from Damascus for a few days and am helping my friends to make some apparel.' I assure you I watched her pretty little fingers adjusting the patterns and then cutting out so neatly, with perfect admiration and respect. Her

DOMESTIC INDUSTRY

little nieces are now in our schools. A respectable young woman, in a plain lilac dress, fastened up to the throat, sat down on the divan beside the ladies. She too had been in the school at Beirut."

1865 - 1866

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA

CHAPTER 8

IN the following year, 1865, Mrs. Thompson visited England and her zeal and Christian devotion raised up many friends for Syria, whose liberality enabled her largely to extend the field of her operations. She was also invited by the Commissioners of the International Reformatory and School Exhibition to send specimens of the rich gold-embroidered work and other articles of industry done in the British Syrian Schools.

A prominent position was assigned to the Syrian stand and its tasteful arrangement and interesting groups of figures, dressed in the native costumes of Damascus, the Lebanon, etc., attracted much attention.

The Exhibition was opened by H. R. H. the Prince of Wales, who, on coming up to the stand, at once recognized Mrs. Thompson and in the kindest manner inquired after the schools - how many women and children were in attendance; and expressed his satisfaction at the large increase of the schools.

At the distribution of the prizes, the bronze medal was awarded to her by the Earl of Shaftesbury, who congratulated her on the success her noble mission.

In the absence of her friend Miss Whately whose Egyptian stand excited great interest, Mrs. Thompson had the pleasure to be entrusted with the medal awarded to her. She did not return till the spring of 1866, when she was accompanied by two teachers to aid her in the schools.

Meantime Mr. and Mrs. Mentor Mott generously undertook the entire charge of the whole mission during her absence, under circumstances of peculiar difficulty and anxiety. For it was the time when God's sore judgments were upon the whole land of Syria - first the desolating plague of locusts, followed in quick succession by the cattle murrain and the cholera, with all their melancholy train: fever, distress and scarcity of food. These visitations told heavily and greatly added to the trial of the work; but God's hand was over them for good - not one of the women or children fell a victim to the cholera. The 91st Psalm, with which the school was closed, was their stay and its reassuring echoes followed many to their distant homes. Then, too, our bands of teachers and pupils who were scattered over the mountains carried the good seed into fresh districts; took their Bible or Testament and other books in the hope of gathering a few children around them and many of our little ones went about among their friends repeating their hymns and texts of Scripture.

Among the interesting episodes of this year's work we may extract the following from Mrs. Mentor Mott's letters:

"A short time ago, one of the little Jewish girls who attended the Olive-Branch School was taken ill. She said that she must say her lessons and repeated the hymn, 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild.' The mother and grandmother, who are very strict Jewesses, would not suffer her to continue and stopped

THE DRUSE MAIDEN

her, saying, 'It will be time enough to say your lessons when you go back to school,' She, however, repeated the entire hymn. Shortly afterwards the dear child breathed her last and we may indeed hope that she now rests with her Saviour.

"One of our dear little Druse girls has recently lost her father, who was an enlightened man. He took much interest in the progress of his children and often questioned them on what they were taught at school. He frequently read the Holy Scriptures, for which he expressed great admiration. On his death his little girl was placed under the guardianship of his relations. When the schools were about to re-assemble, one of the teachers went to fetch her little pupil from her mountain-home. But, alas! permission for the child to go was refused. She burst into tears and said, 'It is because I am a Christian and wish to remain so and go to my dear school and my beloved teachers. They want me to worship the calf,* but I cannot and will not, because I know it is a sin. I am a Christian and will remain one for ever, by God's help.'

"Her mother said she was always reading her Testament and repeating and singing hymns; and if any swore or cursed in her presence, she would tell them it was wrong and that God would be angry with them; and that nothing could turn away her mind from what she had learnt.

"This little girl, though only nine years old, has been since betrothed and placed under a Druse Sheikh for religious instruction."

The year 1866 marked a new and important epoch in the history of the Syrian schools.

The return of the founder of these schools to time scene of her self-denying labours, after a visit to this country, during which her unceasing advocacy of the cause so near her heart produced a deep and, it is to be hoped,

* The calf is the popular Druse idol, worshipped by the uninitiated.

RETURN OF MRS. BOWEN THOMPSON

lasting interest in the work; the establishing through her means of branch associations in England and Scotland; the completion of the Madresse Inglese, or Normal Training School, at Beirut, 'opened free of debt,' besides a valuable piece of land adjoining for a playground; the rapid extension of the work through the Lebanon; the opening of new branch schools at Upper Mosaitbeh and Mokhtara and prospectively also at Zachleh and Deir el Kamm, which were either in full progress or on the point of being opened; the strong appreciation of Mrs. Bowen Thompson's labours by all classes of the community, shown by the applications for schools and aid from many quarters and the committal of the education of the highest ladies in the land, Druse and Christian, Jew and Mohammedan, to her care - all point to the speedy fulfilment of that glorious promise when Lebanon shall flourish as the garden of the Lord and its intelligent, though long down-trodden and oppressed, people become the means, in God's hand, of the spiritual regeneration of the once favoured but now degraded East.

Two large infant schoolrooms were erected; an upper story and a wing resting upon arcades were added to the institution, also a porter's lodge and wall enclosing the premises, the whole substantially built of stone; while Mrs. Mentor Mott, at her own expense, added a beautiful gallery, commanding a splendid view of the Mediterranean and Lebanon.

The following letter from Mrs. B. Thompson, dated Beirut, November 23rd, 1866, describes the dedication of the institution and marriage of Mualim Georgius and Sara Sarkisse:

"These two events took place yesterday. By an hour after sunset all was arranged. At the upper end of the large hall, on the infant-school gallery, were seated our adopted children and boarders - in four tiers - the *protégées* in pink, the boarders in white, all sitting under the shadow of the British flag. Along both sides of the hall were divans and carpets and also in the music

DEDICATION OF NEW SCHOOLROOMS

and dining-rooms, for the parents of the boarders and friends of the bride. The guests began to arrive at half-past six: after partaking of coffee, the gentlemen and some ladies went to fetch the bride. They were gone nearly an hour and a half, a dreadful time of suspense to the poor bridegroom. During this interval the Dedication Service took place. The Rev. Mr. Robertson gave a short address, stating the object, read 1 Kings viii. in English and offered an appropriate prayer. Mr. Jessup took up the same subject in Arabic and implored a blessing upon those by whose liberality and care this house had been reared, upon her who stood here as the head of the institution and for the teachers, the children, the parents and friends. Many beautiful Arabic and English hymns were sung in the course of the evening.

“A Druse Prince and his attendants were also unexpectedly present on the occasion. This Emir, who was one of the leaders in the war and has been concealed five years in the Hauran, among the giant cities of Bashan, was introduced to me just before the wedding, as he wished to have his daughter educated. Mualinr Selim introduced him to me as one of the first of the Druse princes. I assigned him a good place among the gentlemen, who paid him special respect. It was curious to watch his countenance during the reading of the Arabic Scriptures, but still more at the solemn marriage address. A Mohammedan gentleman was present, also Greeks and Maronites, as well as Protestants.

“I was told to expect forty or fifty guests; but when at last the bride arrived with her maidens, nearly the whole of the Protestant community of natives followed her and soon filled all the rooms thrown open to the guests.

“Mrs. Mott and I, escorted by Mr. Robertson and Mr. Jessup, went out to receive the bride, who, according to custom, was welcomed by some of the ladies sprinkling her with rose-water and scents. He then gave a suitable address in Arabic; and after their hands were joined, the children sang the

WEDDING OF A TEACHER

beautiful Arabic marriage-hymn. The bride now received the congratulations of the females and the bridegroom those of the men. After this, sweets and refreshments were handed round and narghiehies, which are indispensable at weddings. The children had sugar-plums and cake and went up two-and-two to salute the bride; after which they filed off to their dormitories. All went off beautifully and everybody was delighted.”

The following anecdote illustrates the power of God’s word to comfort and solace - alone yet not alone:

“One morning, soon after daybreak, as I was riding down from Zachleh, we had to stop at a toll-bar on the Damascus road. The man was fast asleep within. Georgius said, ‘This poor man is a Maronite; he was complaining one day to Mr. Mott that he was miserable, being alone in that solitary toll-bar, having nobody to speak to. Mr. Mott told him he need not be alone. ‘Had he a Bible?’ ‘No.’ ‘A Testament?’ ‘No.’ Finding he could read, Mr. Mott gave him a Testament. When he came to the door and saw Georgius, his first inquiry was after the Howadja. He said he was another man since he had the large Arabic Testament; that he had read it twice all through and was now reading it for the third time; that he never felt lonely now; that his brother, who was a teacher at Sûk el Gherb, sometimes came to see him and that he was so delighted with the Testament, that he had bought one for himself and was teaching it to his boys.”

FRUITS OF HAREEM VISIT

Mrs. Mott writes:

“*March 1st* - You are aware that our Bible-woman is a welcome visitor at some of the Turkish hareems. Well, a few days ago, a tall and handsome woman called upon me at the Madresse early in the morning and attended our prayers in the great hall. She then presented a letter of introduction from

UNSEEN WORK

our Bible-woman at Hasbeya. She was a Moslem lady of rank and asked me to recommend a physician to her for her eyes, which did. She told me she was a Mohammedan, but that her two young daughters, who attend our school regularly, were making great progress, both in Arabic and English and had given her a letter for me. She spoke so highly of Sofia, of her love and devotion to the children and her regular visits to the castle, which she never left without reading to the ladies. It is manifest that the number of these dear girls, of the highest rank, all going and returning together with their little Mohammedan or Druse waiting-maids and then telling their mothers what they have been doing and learning their lessons for the next day, has a marked influence on those who take an interest in their progress."

BEIRUT, 13TH FEBRUARY

"Mussurrah continues to visit her neighbours and the parents of her pupils, who are glad to hear her read the word of God. Among these is a poor bedridden man, who is suffering from a disease which is gradually consuming the flesh of one of his legs. One day last summer, when Mr. M. visited him at Mussurrah's request, he found him in a most pitiable condition of suffering and want. By the side of his pallet stood a little box and, on Mr. M. inquiring if he could read, the poor man, pointing to the box, said that his young son, on his return from the Pine Forest School, daily read the Bible to him, which was a great comfort in the midst of his pain and penury. The boy, who was by, opened his box and with much glee exhibited his Testament, hymn-book and reading-book - a scant library, but one which has brought light and happiness to an otherwise desolate home."

BEIRUT, 22ND JUNE, 1866

"A few days since a fine Moslem girl, in one of our elementary schools, asked

me to go to see her mother, who is ill. I took Catrina with me and found Miriam, her sister, with the Moslem lady. They received me with the warmth and urbanity of Christians and I soon learnt that young Catrina had been doing the work of the little maid of the land of Israel in this family. Catrina loves the school, her Bible, her Saviour and every evening she reads the word of God with her neighbours. She said to them one day: 'How unhappy you must be without a Messiah!' 'We don't want a Messiah,' the Moslem women replied; and then Catrina told them, their souls would not go to heaven if they had not the Messiah. She invited Anbara to come to school with her and learn to read. As soon as the New Testament was brought into the house, the Moslem neighbours said this was a great shame to them. At first the father was angry, but now he reads it; and at my request Miriam read Luke xv. and Anbara a few verses of St. John.

"Miriam walked home with me from the Moslem's house and she told me she could never reward Mrs. Mott for having taken her into the women's school after the cholera. She could not read then, but had learnt her lessons and a little spelling from Catrina and now the dear child taught her every evening, so that she could read a chapter by herself; she said it was a new life to her; she had been in darkness about her soul, but now, she said, 'I know that Jesus loves me.' Catrina is a very dear girl and wishes much to be a year in our training school. She said, I want to spend my life in teaching others as I have been taught. I want always to do as that text says, 'Freely ye have received - freely give.'"

Still fresh openings invited an extension of the work on every side and early in 1867 Mrs. B. Thompson received for the third time an earnest written request that she would open schools at Deir el Kamar, one of the most important inland towns of the Lebanon, full of the sad and mournful memories of the massacre.

PETITION FROM DIER EL KAMAR

DEIR EL KAMAR, JANUARY 11, 1867

“Our noble lady Mrs. Thompson!

“After asking how you are and hoping you are in good health, we say, We, the dwellers of Deir el Kamar, of the Protestant religion, do inform you that we have sent to you two letters, begging of you to open a school for our girls and for bringing them up in the fear of God; for truly there is no other earthly means for us but seeking from you. As we have seen your zeal in many other places, we are still expecting the fulfilment of this our purpose. So we beg of your goodness to answer for what we have begged of you and that so we shall be helped by your kindness, as many other places are helped by the opening of their schools. And as our hope in you is so great, we have dared to send you this THIRD letter and by this you will be fulfilling the command of Him who hall set you over this blessed and noble work. And, behold! now we knock at the door of mercy and He that bath promised to open it will accomplish our spiritual purposes by opening the door of hope by you. As for the girls, they, we are sure, will go to the school. There are about fifteen of our girls and of our relations; and we hope, after the opening of the school, if you allow it, the number of the girls will increase; for most of the people in Deir el Kamar like the affair as much as ourselves. And now we hope, by all means we hope, your will may respond to this. This is what we beg of you. May you have a long and happy life. - Yours truly.”

[HERE FOLLOW THE SIGNATURES.]

On hearing of this appeal, a friend of the late Countess of Ellesmere, who, when as Lady Francis Egerton, she had visited Syria, had taken a deep interest in the women of Deir el Karnali, nobly came forward and offered to assist in the establishment of the school, on condition that it should bear the name of the “Ellesmere School.”

The following letter from Mrs. Mott illustrates the indirect influence by which Mrs. B. Thompson was enabled to bring home the simple truths of the Gospel without arousing antagonism:-

"Many persons belonging to the Greek Church entrust their children to her care; among these was Hatoon, the daughter of a Greek priest, the adopted *protégée* of Sir Thomas Lloyd. Her mother has been gradually declining in health and been lovingly tended by Hatoon, who has lately been married and whose Christian influence has reacted upon her parents and family. Not many days ago Mart el Houri died and early in the morning the women of the school sent to request, that they might be allowed to repair to the Houri's* house. I need scarcely remind you that in the East, immediately on the death of an individual, all the friends and neighbours hasten to the spot, assemble round the corpse and commence the most terrible wailing, which is kept up in a sort of rhythm. The women beat their breasts, only pausing now and then to lift up the veil which covers the face of the dead and then recommence their loud laments afresh. Large tapers are also lighted and placed at the head of the bier. The women likewise are generally clothed in rags and occasionally tear their garments to express their grief. This is an ancient custom, to which we find frequent reference in the early books of the Bible.

"Mrs. Thompson and I mounted our horses and rode to the Houri's house, which stands in a large mulberry garden. What a scene presented itself! In front of the cottage, stretched on a low bier, wrapped in dark clothing and covered with a veil, lay the good wife of the Greek priest. More than a hundred women were seated on the ground near the bier; among these was one of our Bible-women, who was speaking in a low tone. The three daughters were seated at the head of the corpse. They rose and

* Houri means priest.

GREEK LADY'S FUNERAL

most affectionately greeted their beloved teacher. Mrs. Thompson spoke a few words: such a holy calm pervaded the whole! The men were assembled at the back of the cottage; but the Houris, on hearing that the sitt (lady) had arrived, came up and spoke to us and then stood a little way off. There were no large candles, no bemoaning; our teacher, Georgius, opened his Bible and read very impressively John xi. and different verses of John x. and xiv. He then made an earnest, simple address on the resurrection from death to life - consequent upon the resurrection from sin to holiness - making a personal application to each one present and concluded with their favourite hymn -

*My faith looks up to Thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary;*

the women all repeating it after him, concluding with the Lord's Prayer. It was a most solemn service and would have been striking even at the funeral of a Protestant. Never before has such a service been attempted at the death of a member of the Greek Church, that member being the wife of a priest himself, who was present the whole time and on our leaving, cordially thanked Mrs. Thompson for all her kindness.

“This interesting circumstance will prove to you the ready access and welcome which the Syrian Bible-woman has into the homes even of the Greek priesthood and how her presence can bring light and life into the chamber of death. Indeed, our Bible-woman now attends in many of these gatherings, either of sorrow or joy and the Bible is read and listened to with deep interest.”

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA

CHAPTER 9

AFTER Mrs. B. Thompson's return to her field of labour in 1866, the work rapidly expanded both in numbers of pupils and in the spread of the schools into new districts. The following is her own recapitulation of the work of 1867:

"The past year has flown so rapidly away and has been so replete with events, that it is scarcely possible to comprise in a brief summary the varied details of even the leading occurrences. It has been fraught with blessings, chequered by trials of mind and body, which we hope may be sanctified to the establishment of the work committed to our charge by Him who has said, Take this child and nurse it for me and I will give thee thy wages. He is faithful that promised and in hours of sickness and perplexity has proved Himself the good Physician and the wonderful Counsellor; restoring health to the sick and overruling adverse events to the furtherance of His cause and the glory of His Name.

"The dark clouds which gathered around our horizon early in the year

and threatened to hinder our work, bear promise of being converted into showers of blessings by Him who sitteth above the waterfloods.

“Ours is essentially Woman’s Mission to the Women of Syria;’ but in carrying out that Mission she cannot stand alone. She continually needs the support, the encouragement and counsel of the stronger sex and this has been nobly accorded when most required. We abstain from entering into particulars, but cannot omit the gratifying duty of offering heartfelt thanks to our Ambassadors at Constantinople - Lord Lyons and his successor, the Hon. H. Elliot; the Earl of Shaftesbury, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the British Consul-General at Beirut and other gentlemen. The unabated interest of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, too, was strikingly evidenced, in our time of difficulty, by his graciously commending these schools to His Imperial Majesty the Sultan during his late visit to England.

“Although during the past year we have been hindered in carrying out all our purposed plans, yet, if our work has been quiescent in some quarters, other doors have been opened. Various applications for an extension of our schools have been brought before us ; but while unable to commence operations at Schweyfat, Aitat, the Metan, the Buka’a and among the Drums in the ancient cities of Basilan, we have commenced a central girls’ school at Ain Zahalteh, in compliance with the desire of his Excellency Daoud Pasha, the Governor-General of the Lebanon and are now preparing to enter upon the wide and more important field at Damascus, where Jews and Mohammedans, as well as Greek Christians, have asked for a superior English girls’ school. And while our hearts are thus continually cheered by applications from Christians of various denominations, we have been specially encouraged by the faint streaks of morning which are dawning athwart the darkness of the Mohammedan horizon, giving fair promise of shining more and more unto the perfect day, when ‘the sun of righteousness

shall arise with healing in His wings.' God's ancient people also in these lands are awakening from their long night of darkness and slumber and are seeking for their children that enlightenment which a scriptural education alone can give. The Gospel-seed in the hand of a Moslem or Jewish child, carried into the hareem or the home, while at first only tacitly admitted, may imperceptibly drop into the mother's heart and yield the fruits of repentance and hope.

"The readiness of the rich Mohammedans to send their younger girls to our schools has been followed up by a request for a secluded school for their elder daughters and for a teacher to come daily to the hareems to instruct the young women.

"Our parent institution, in Beirut, gives growing cause for satisfaction. Several of our young people are now on trial as teachers in our branch schools; and after gaining some experience in teaching and becoming gradually habituated to difficulties and privations; return to the institution for further improvement, when their place is supplied by others of their young companions.

"The work of the Bible-women has also extended and instead of four, we now number six, supported by the friends of the 'Book and its Mission.' Two Bible-women have commenced their work in Damascus.

"In the Normal Training Institution the number of adopted orphans, boarders and pupil-teachers, has increased from fifty-four to seventy-seven, while the character of the instruction has been of a higher description.

"Of course our great desideratum is thoroughly trained *native* teachers, because, if the land is to be evangelized and civilized, it must be by native agency, especially the agency of women, the future wives, mothers and teachers of Syria.

"The band of young pupil-teachers which we have been enabled to raise

NATIVE TEACHERS

up through the kindness of friends at home - though not so efficient as we hope it may become - has, nevertheless, evidenced the feasibility of this plan. Fourteen of our young girls are now engaged as tyro teachers and it will be an encouragement to their friends at home to learn what acceptance they find in the localities where they are placed."

The seventh annual examination took place on January 27, 28 and 29 and the growing interest in female education was evidenced by the crowded attendance of visitors, Europeans and natives, on each of these days from two o'clock till sunset, about 1,000 being present on one occasion.

The attendance of the natives was very large, among whom was His Excellency Khamil Pasha, Governor of Beirut, who expressed himself delighted with what he saw and heard. The Arabic Journal printed the following speech, by Urshee Mendrietie Gabriel Gebara, the first Greek preacher in Beirut, of which we insert a few extracts:

"If we observe, we shall see that the females are the most useful and influential members of society. They have in their hearts the source of happiness or misfortune to our race. Yes the women, if left uneducated, are the worst and most hurtful means of unhappiness and ruin; and it is proved from many evidences that they are the fundamental means of the enlightenment of a country. I can give many instances of the importance of looking back to the first generations, or to Europe in its present state. But allow me to dwell now upon the Bible only."

He then spoke of some of the women of the Bible - Sarah, Rebecca, Hannah, Ruth, Deborah, Esther, the Marys, Phoebe and others. Next of 'the illustrious woman who reigns over 150 millions, Victoria, Queen of England;' of her subjects and their happiness under her rule. One of them had come to this country and opened so many schools and begun many a great work of

GREEK PRIEST'S ADDRESS

charity.

The speaker then turned to the young girls, saying,

"My young friends, you must learn from your lady the lesson of Christian charity which caused her to leave her country and come here to labour and spend her life and health for the welfare of others. How much more ought you to work for your own native land! We are all obliged to her and to England. We used to treat women with contempt, thinking that they were not to be our equals in domestic life and duties; but now we see that women are on a level with us, if not capable of higher attainments. We also see that they are the best helps for education and usefulness."

He concluded by saying that,

"Although our country has not reached the degree at which it aims; yet, seeing so goodly a number in the school and the great progress manifested by the children today, confirms my opinion that the day is not far when many of my fellow-countrymen will place their daughters in these schools."

Want of space prevents our giving a full report of the next address, by Mr. Butros Bistani, the principal and founder of the Native Syrian Boys' College, whose opinions are a first authority in Syria. He said :

"If we look back twenty or thirty years, we find scarcely one out of a hundred who could read or write - perhaps a few simple boys' schools, but no girls' school whatever! From what we have seen today, we learn what one woman can do in society from the work of Mrs. Bowen Thompson here in our country. Nobody knows more about her than I do. I have known her since the very beginning and seen her labour among the refugees and poor who came crowding to her house. Then the progress of her schools and her,

MOSLEM LADIES

watchful, constant care and tenderness towards the children, I cannot help manifesting great gratitude, which I think our countrymen will join me in expressing to her, closing with this sentence - 'The hand that rocks the cradle can shake the world.'"

Mrs. Bowen Thompson continued her visits to the Moslem hareems. The family of one in high official position spoke very feelingly and intelligently, during one of these visits, on the necessity of bringing the happiness of education within the reach of Mohammedan women and elder girls. "One lady," she writes, "asked, could I not make some arrangement for the education of the elder girls, the only condition being that no men should have any access, either masters or servants? Such requests have been made by some of the Effendis themselves.

"These and similar applications led me to fix a day when I could receive some of the principal Mohammedan ladies to converse on this subject, The rain fell in torrents, but they kept their engagement. Even the lovely wife of Khamil Pasha came in her close carriage with other ladies.

"I have promised to take this important subject into consideration and to bring it before my friends in England. Surely it is a most wonderful opening and one that cannot be passed by with indifference, or deferred to a more convenient season. Let us remember that the Mohammedan girl, as soon as she has reached the age of nine or ten years, is shut up in the hareem with idle and ignorant women. There is then no further hope for progress. The lessons learnt by the little girl at school are forgotten; for there is none to teach or encourage her to study by herself at home. The visits of the Bible-woman, or of a Christian lady who has their welfare at heart, may maintain the flickering light and recall the texts and hymns of earlier days; but this is insufficient to rouse her from the *dolce far niente* of Oriental life.

"Dear friends may it be the Lord's will that the False Prophet be destroyed

by the bright shining of the Gospel into the hearts of many of his followers! I do not mean to spiritualize prophecy, but I have a strong hope for the Moslem; and that the prayer of the Father of the Faithful will yet be answered 'Oh that Islam of might live before Thee!' The ever-increasing desire for the education of their daughters is a subject for great thankfulness and rejoicing, Would that the English, nationally, were doing more to promote it than we can yet say they have done!"

This year, like the former, was chequered by numerous complications, which for a time threatened to interfere with the good understanding that had from the first subsisted between Mrs. Thompson and the Government authorities. The oft-repeated petitions for an English school, from the principal and most enlightened inhabitants of Zachleh, had induced Mr. and Mrs. Mott and herself to take up their summer residence in 1866 in this most lovely and picturesque spot. The following extracts afford an amusing illustration of the numerous petty annoyances by which it was sought to weary her out and get her into trouble with the Government. Mrs. Thompson says:

"The report of the approaching establishment of an English school quickly caught the attention of the priests, who stirred up a secret opposition to the work. Under these circumstances I considered it advisable to postpone the establishment of the school till I could ascertain the disposition of the people by a short residence amongst them. At the commencement of the sinner vacation we went to Zachleh and were immediately visited by the principal resident families and by visitors from Baalbec and Damascus, who eagerly inquired when the school was to be opened. On the other hand, we were closely watched by other parties and were not a little amused one morning at hearing that a complaint had been preferred against me to those in authority, that I had opened a school, hoisted a flag and rung a bell; and,

moreover, was agitating a commotion among the Zachlehites!

An official inquiry was actually instituted; the result of which was to draw down ridicule and shame upon those who had made the accusation, while it united in our favour parties who had for years been at enmity between themselves and who now took special pains to testify their respect for the English family. Many times on a Monday we were surprised at the number of our visitors, very inquisitive as to our views on certain religious points and likewise as to my intention of opening a school; and in the course of conversation it would come out that we, the English, had been publicly denounced from the altar the previous Sunday and those who should venture to visit us anathematized. They always came and told us what the priests had said publicly; *they* did not heed their threats and begged that I would not mind them, but give them a girls' school such as I had at Beirut and Hasbeya.

“At our departure from Zachleh, as Mr. Mott, who had been seriously ill, was being carried down the slope to Máalaca, many of the people, who crowded on the walls and the low roofs of their houses, asked for a blessing on him and us and among them was a Greek priest, who cordially shook hands with us.”

Thus matters went on - the school at Zachleh remained in abeyance, but a small girls' school was commenced at Deir el Kamar, in the house of one of the native teachers. The same opposition was aroused here, which resulted in the closing of the school and the imprisonment of the teacher. The affair was laid before the English Ambassador at the Porte and H.R.H. the Prince of Wales graciously brought it under the notice of the Sultan. In the good providence of God the dark and dreaded cloud cleared away and resulted in showers of blessing his Excellency the Governor-General, in the most frank and friendly manner, offered to aid Mrs. Thompson in opening

B'TEDDIN

a large school in the neighbouring village of Ain Zahalteh. Mrs. Thompson stood firm to her principle - 'the power to open a school unfettered by any official authorization.' But this only served to raise her yet more highly in the estimation of those connected in this affair; and in the summer of 1868 she received an Imperial Firman, giving her full powers to open the schools at Zachleh and Bier el Kamar and calling upon the authorities to give her their fullest aid and protection.

But the chief event of the year was the founding of the school of Ain Zahalteh, or the Fall of the Waters, rising in the heart of Mount Lebanon, amid the most glorious scenery - a central place, with roads connecting it with the great thoroughfare from Beirut to Damascus on the north-east and on the west with the heart of the Druse district, Deir el Kamar. His Excellency Daoud Pasha, the Governor-General of the Lebanon, was anxious to make this place the central Protestant position on Mount Lebanon. One object of good government being the steady progressive working, step by step, from an approved centre, the importance of a superior English school in the midst of the Protestant community commended itself to the enlightened view of the Governor; and he considers that, when once firmly established, it will produce great influence upon the surrounding country and ere, long send forth healthy offshoots to Deir el Kamar, Zachleh and other towns in the Lebanon.

The Pasha invited Mrs. Thompson to B'teddin, where she and her party were most courteously entertained for some days. We subjoin a few extracts from her letters relative to this deeply interesting event.

AIN ZAHALTEH, OCTOBER 10TH, 1807

"Never have I seen so manifest an evidence of the fact that the hearts of kings are in His hands; He turneth them withersoever He pleaseth. I did not tell

MOUNTAIN ROAD

you of all the difficulties that surrounded my path as the time drew on. I had, however, so fully rolled off the whole burden upon my God, that I felt sure He would undertake for me. On the next day I received a message from the Pasha to say he should be *charmé de me voir*. We started before sunrise and reached Deir el Kamar after five hours' ride on horseback, rested till four, when we rode up to B'teddin. The Pasha came to meet me, taking hold of my hand with both his, entered into general conversation and on my alluding to business said, 'You are tired now; we will speak of this to-morrow.' I declined, but he would not listen to any refusal; he clapped his hands and gave directions to have apartments prepared for myself and the ladies who accompanied me. The conversation at dinner was chiefly in French; all the company rose at the same time with the ladies and retired with us to the divan. After partaking of pipes and coffee and listening to two celebrated pipers, the gentlemen retired and the Pasha began on the subject of the schools. On my telling him that I had arranged to go to Ain Zahalteh the next morning, he said it was out of the question; I had come to B'teddin to repose; and that when I did go to Ain Zahalteh, he wished to accompany me and that with a public demonstration, that the whole Lebanon might be impressed.

"Preparations were made the night before and the Pasha arranged to accompany me in person, with his suite and soldiers, the tents and kitchen being sent on in advance. By sunrise on Saturday morning we were all mounted; it was a most picturesque sight, as the whole *cortége*, single file, wound round the new carriage-road. Time panorama changed every instant: deep valleys, romantic villages and mountain chains, clad in a variety of atmospheric hues, gladden the heart and eye at every turn. About one-third of the road is ready, different sections are also completed; but these have to be united, some by bridges, others by the breaking up of vineyards which the Pasha left undisturbed till the poor people should have gathered in the

FIRST OPERATIONS

vintage. At such points we had often to make considerable *détours* and the Pasha not only sent his courier in advance, but first went himself to see which was the best way. As we were riding along, the Pasha said that we must have a double feast the day this road is opened: first at our schoolhouse, when he would come over in his carriage to open it and give an entertainment; and then we, in our turn, to accompany him to B'teddin to celebrate the opening of the road.

“As we came in sight of Ain Zahalteh, a long procession of the inhabitants, Christian and Druse, were awaiting the arrival of the Pasha and after making their salaams surrounded and followed his horse. The whole village had turned out in their best - such as it was. We at once repaired to the tent and after breakfast the Pasha offered me his arm and we all went through the village seeking for a suitable schoolhouse; but, alas such poverty, such filth, met us on every side, that we returned to the tent without finding a decent place to put our heads in. He kindly offered to leave me his tent and was evidently distressed that he had brought us to such a place. He insisted on our returning with him to B'teddin to pass a quiet Sunday.

“We had, however, much work before us, with little time to do it in; and it was finally arranged that we should sleep in the church. On Monday morning the Druse governor offered me the hareem part of his house, the ladies being all willing to crowd together in two lower rooms for the next three months, on condition that they might come, to be taught and I at once engaged some persons to turn out the goods and chattels.

“The dirt, dilapidation and vermin of these rooms baffle description; and the people were so amazed to see that cobwebs of a respectable standing had to come down, or that certain annoying insects had to be ferreted out of the crevices of the tumble-down walls, that nothing remained but for us to tuck up our dresses, tic a handkerchief over our heads, take broom and brush in

hand and set them an example in this way many willing hands were soon at work, also carpenters and masons to make temporary partitions, to prevent the Druse ladies being over looked, stop up the broken walls and put up a few shelves. When the Pasha came on Tuesday, he was quite amazed when he saw the neat room, benches, desks and black board, all ready to begin school, together with the patchwork and Lady Belper's kind gift of knitting cotton. I have since been to see a part of the old castle; all that remains is the ground and the stones. It has been decided to build a schoolhouse, towards which the Pasha has given 1,000 francs and he ordered his engineers to draw up the plans.

OPENING OF THE PALM-BRANCH SCHOOL AT AIN ZAHALTEH

October 20th - On the 11th I had the delight to welcome Miss Lindsay and five of the girls. We all set hard to work, as I was anxious to begin the school at Ain Zahalteh on your birthday, October 13th and in this I succeeded. The children came before morning prayers and walked two-and-two to the little native church, under the care of our girls, who led the singing. In the afternoon the native preacher, Haled, came to the schoolroom, where about twenty children were seated behind the new desks from Beirut, looking neat and happy. After commencing with a hymn, Haleel read a portion of Solomon's dedication of time Temple and offered up a suitable prayer, followed by one in English by me for all aiding in this work - the Committee, Miss Copley, Lady Exeter and our many loved ones, whose hearts I know will be rejoiced that the Palm-Branch School' should have been opened at Ain Zahalteh on this day. Very special prayer was offered up for the Pasha.

On Monday we began school with twenty-two children, some of whom we had to send back three times, because they were not clean. Next day we had several more, all so neat! Each child brought her five paras - one farthing

OPENING OF SCHOOL

- for a week's schooling and the Sheikh's children one halfpenny. I can assure you, in this poor village, where the people live from hand to mouth, this is something gained. The children also pay for their books, at least in part. Few of the tiny fingers had ever held a needle and it was charming to see the pains our girls took in teaching their little scholars. I am sure that this school will soon become a thriving one. Our own girls will have the advantage of being specially taught in English by Miss Lindsay and in the evening the teacher of the boys' school will give them lessons in Arabic, grammar and arithmetic. What pleased me much was to see our girls all willing to work and to take charge of the rooms as well as of the school; they will, I hope, become good mountain teachers, of whom there is very great need."

Not less interesting was the progress at Hasbeya, of which Miss Sack writes thus:

August - We went to the house of Custa, the native preacher, whose daughter Hernia is our teacher. I stayed three days, much pleased with my visit. A truly Christian spirit hallows everything around the old man; he seems like an aged prophet and has friends among all sects, who come and consult him while he reads and explains the Bible. On Sundays Hernia, meets many mothers and women: she told me it was quite touching to see the tears rolling down their cheeks as she read to them about Christ. The school was kept in a room near the church, till I secured a nice house between Herma's and Custa's. The number of children present was fifty. This is a sad falling off from last year, when there was a regular attendance of 120; but many families have fled to the Hauran, while some of the chiefmen of Hasbeya, representing the power and wealth of the place, have been imprisoned for refusing to pay the tithes. Severe fever, too, has laid low many of the children. Takla, the teacher, has herself suffered and is not able to summon her pupils as usual; hence our number has dwindled to less than half. Sitt Naify's grandchild and

DAMASCUS

many children from the castle, come to the school. Her son-in-law, Seleem Beg, offered his house for the school; but part of it is dilapidated; and then, too, the hundreds of Druses who meet here every year would frighten the poor children; besides which it is not customary for women to be seen in the Druse quarters. I called on the Mudir's wife, a charming Moslem lady and we became so interested that three hours passed before we were aware of it. Next day she returned the call en grand gala, with her daughter and attendants. Some of the children come to our school, but she wants private instruction for the elder ones. I also went to the seraglio and saw the different princesses, who made many inquiries after you. In the evening, when Takla went down to the river, she came back with Custa's daughters greatly delighted, having met some English ladies, who had given them a Gospel of St. Mark in English; the next day I met the party going towards Mount Hermon. They had been agreeably surprised to find that Takla could speak English and sing so well. I quite hope that she will become a blessing to the school. We had an examination and I asked Mualim Georgius to dedicate the new school house."

Mrs. Thompson adds:

"The school at Hasbeya is an important one and much visited by travellers. We intend having an English resident teacher, for we regard Hasbeya as one of the most important stations for Christian civilization in the Lebanon. It seems wonderful that under the very eye of Sitt Naify, the sister of Said Jumblatt Beg, of Mokhtara, our Protestant school is not only tolerated, but attended by members of her own family."

But the most wonderful step in advance made this year was the invitation to open schools in Damascus - an invitation spontaneous from the people themselves and from those who were firm adherents of any other than the Protestant faith. The people of Damascus have long manifested a love for

PETITION FROM DAMASCUSS

education and seeing the progress made by several young Damascene girls in the schools, together with the strong recommendation of them by the Greek priest Gebara, some of the principal inhabitants sent a petition to Mrs. Bowen Thompson for an English school conducted on the principles of the British Syrian Schools at Beirut. After a visit of inquiry to Damascus, from which it appeared that the missionaries who have been there above twenty years did not consider it expedient to deviate from their rule to teach any language except the Arabic, or give other than an elementary education and could not, therefore, themselves undertake to establish such a school as the Damascenes had asked for, Mrs. Thompson considered it best to forward their petition to England."

**TRANSLATION OF THE ARABIC PETITION FROM THE GREET,
ROMAN CATHOLIC, JEWISH AND OTHER INHABITANTS
OF DAMASCUS TO MRS. BOWEN THOMPSON.
DAMASCUS, SEPTEMBER 1857**

"Most Repected Madam,

"You must be aware of the interest all our countrymen take in these days in education and their eager desire to acquire those sciences and literary improvements which are the foundation of success, the basis of civilization, the life of society and the greatest means for union, friendly relations and enlightenment, upon which the happiness of our country depends. And whereas it is the duty of every patriotic man to try and do his best in raising his country and elevating it to the same degree at which nations of civilized countries have arrived and especially in such an enlightened age as ours; and whereas we have full confidence in your great, Christian and well-known zeal and love and that of your respected Committee, in having opened, in Beirut and Lebanon, schools which are very successful and well directed; and whereas our town Damascus, the capital of Syria and in ancient times one of the important seats and

PETITION FROM DAMASCUS

protectresses of science and literature - has at present, for causes we need not mention, been deprived of the means of education and the inhabitants have no more the ability to support such institutions and to defray their expenses, on account of the backward state of their trade and arts and their becoming in the utmost state of poverty and need:

"We, the undersigned, beg respectfully that you be pleased to look favourably to our present petition in opening a school for the boys and another for the girls, in which to teach such sciences and languages which you might deem useful and necessary to the inhabitants and to supply them with such teachers as doomed by you well qualified for that purpose, begging at the same time you will please transmit this, our petition, to the Committee of the Syrian English Schools, who are well known as the founders of such benevolent institutions. We hope they will look favourably upon this our request and through your influence will begin this good work.

"We are sure that your zeal and that of the English societies who are most famous for the promotion and aid of Christian instruction will not disappoint us in this request.

"And may God the Most High prosper and protect your kingdom and your respectable and zealous people and preserve you. Amen. And may He that giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater, increase your seed and give increase to the products of your righteousness, Amen."

**[HERE FOLLOW THE SIGNATURES, ATTESTED BY
THE SEALS OF FORTY-FOUR PETITIONERS.]**

From Mrs. Thompson:

DAMASCUS, SEPTEMBER 20TH, 1867

"We are staying in the house of the Greek Consul, whose daughter is coming to Beirut, as a boarder. The Greek community are entreating to have an

PETITION FROM DAMASCUS

English girls' school. Several priests came to urge the same request and today fifty gentlemen of the Greek community called to beg for a school: one of the principal men desired to thank me, in the name of his countrymen, for the benefit that had resulted to Syria from the establishment of the English schools. Mr. Mashaka, the American Consul, assured me that our girls' school had provoked the establishment of the other high schools in Beirut and he feels sure that if England would stretch out her hands of love and pity to the young girls of Damascus, another order of things would very soon arrive. We have had visits from very many. They say, Why do we establish schools in insignificant districts, or in the neighbourhood of Beirut, for which so much is already done and not cast a thought upon Damascus, the most ancient city in the world, with its 150,000 inhabitants? The French Lazarists have a large girls' school, numbering one hundred and fifty children of the better classes. They have all to learn the Roman Catholic Catechism, attend mass and even to parade the bazaars after the Host, the Turkish soldiers heading the procession. The Greeks feel scandalized to see their daughters thus exhibiting in a Romish procession and are most anxious to remove them from such influences. I inquired; 'Why not send them to Mr. Robson, who has a small Arabic school?' But he afterwards informed me that his Mission had decided to teach only Arabic and that if the parents required English or French, or needlework, they must procure the masters. These, however, are not to be had. All are ready to pay something, though at first this will be only a little. I told them it was impossible for me to say anything; all I could do would be to forward their petition. One's whole soul is stirred within one to see this noble city in so much darkness and ignorance. Of course the importance of Damascus cannot be questioned and if by any means a school could be established where English and French are taught, I feel sure we should speedily have 200 children. Perhaps the Lord may soon enable us to do something."

DAMASCUS SUNDAY

"September 30th, 1867 - The additional day at Damascus gave us an opportunity of seeing more of the people and of the small Protestant community. On Sunday I went to the new Protestant Church - a neat building capable of containing about 200 or 250 persons. The attendance was very small, as most of the young men were away in the mountains. The female compartment is as yet but little frequented. I went early and found one young woman; she seized my hand and said, 'Don't you remember me? my name is Theresa. I was in your women's school after the massacre.' She told me that, having learnt to sew while in the school, she was now able to have a little sewing class of her own; but that she greatly lamented that she had not had more opportunity for learning to read.

By this time Miriam M, another of the Damascus women who had joined our school in Beirut the first day it was opened (and was subsequently assistant teacher in my laundry school), had come in and sat down by me. I told Theresa that I had just appointed Miriam Bible-woman in Damascus and that she would be delighted to teach her to read and help her to understand the Bible. Two sisters now came in and with delight caught a few words of what had passed. After service I arranged with these three young women and Miriam that they were to meet on certain days of the week for reading the Scriptures together, with prayer. They were delighted; and have every reason to believe that Miriam will prove faithful to her calling and visit and teach, many women in Damascus who are ignorant of the light, liberty and love of the Gospel of Christ. Mr. Robson has kindly promised to look after Miriam and hand over to her the monthly salary, for which. I have to look to dear Mrs. Ranyard and the friends of the *Missing Link*. To have postponed Miriam's appointment might have proved a hindrance to any future commencement. I have agreed with her for £1 per month and I feel the sweetest confidence that God will provide the means.

SCHOOL FOR JEWESSES

“Mr. Mashaka, who is one of the first and most distinguished Protestants at Damascus and who by his missionary zeal has done more for his country than perhaps almost any native, strongly urged the necessity of a first-rate English school at Damascus.

“Some of the Jewish families, especially those of Lisbona and Stamboli, are equally desirous of an English school. One of the highest Moslems, an Effendi, invited me to his house when I returned to open the school. The Pasha, too, was pleased to hear of the proposed school; so also was Abd-el-Kader, to whom I named it.

“An interesting feature among the Jewish community is that they offered to the Rev. E. B. Frankel a plot of ground for the erection of an English school for their children.

“The Jews especially are most anxious and willing to send their children to the school and some of them have given help towards it; but many are too poor to pay for the education they so much desire.

“At the first, I believe, we must help the poor, of whom there are thousands without education; wherever you go you find lovely little girls peeping at you from beneath their mendills with large sparkling eyes and returning your smile with a pretty salaam.

“It has been agreed upon that, as the rich were contending, the poor *ought not to pay*, that they should do so for them; and I proposed that for every pound they should have the privilege of sending four children for one year free - i.e., to our Arabic school; and this, I am glad to say, meets their objections. In this way several Jewish children have already been adopted four little ones for one pound. May a rich blessing attend this plan!

“I was much amused one day, while arranging about the establishing of a girls' school, to see the anxiety of the youngest son of our friend, a fine lad of nine years. He turned to Selim and said, ‘And what is to become of the boys?’

DAMASCUS

Are they to be hanged?' This is an Arabic expression full of significance and the sentiment pervades all classes.

"The call from Damascus cannot fail to awaken an earnest desire in the heart of every English woman, ay and every noble-minded Englishman, to deliver their Damascene sisters from the degrading bondage of the false prophet. And what student of his Bible, what friend of God's ancient people, but will feel it a privilege to send back to Damascus that light which, by the teaching of Paul, the Apostle of us Gentiles, has made his own soul wise unto salvation?

"It is not needful to plead for Damascus - the very name sends a thrill of holy associations through the soul; and who, while pondering her marvellously changeful history and long enthrallment, does not yearn to see her again rejoice in the light and liberty of the Gospel? Yes, dear friends, I refrain from making an appeal for Damascus. Damascus pleads for herself. Her cause has been laid before the Lord by many of His praying people and we now await the response.

"Yea, the very stones of Damascus are crying out and pleading the glorious prophetic promise which has been hid for ages front Moslem jealousy in its unknown tongue, but is now disclosed, as if for our special encouragement, bidding us 'Arise and go into Damascus.' In the street which is still called 'Straight' stands the great Mosque - once a Christian cathedral and built, it is said, on the site of the House of Rimmon. Above its magnificent, but almost inaccessible portal, still remains engraven in the Greek characters -

*'Thy kingdom, O Christ, is an everlasting kingdom,
And Thy dominion endureth throughout all ages.'*

It seems to bid us be of good courage; that the day is at hand when this dark and blighted land shall become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ and

PROPHETIC PLEDGES

He shall reign for ever and ever.

“Let us remember, too, that we are working in the very ‘Land of Promise,’ that we hold in our hands the title-deeds of its yet unfulfilled possession, confirmed by the oath of Him that cannot lie and ratified by the most solemn acts recorded in Holy Writ. (Genesis 15.)

“We are too apt to limit its confines from ‘Dan to Beersheba,’ which was but an earnest of the future inheritance. This in its vast domain will extend front the shores of the Mediterranean to the River Euphrates and from the Nile and the Red Sea to the entrance of Hamath on the banks of the Orontes. Thus we are graciously permitted to work in the Lord’s portion. He has hitherto supplied all our needs and we trust He is graciously permitting us to make ready a people prepared for the Lord!”

In throwing a brief retrospect over the important events of the past year, Mrs. Thompson sums up all with, “My heart is filled with wonder, love and praise as I contemplate the wonderful way the Lord my God has led me; truly I can say, ‘Out of weakness made strong.’ I am thankful beyond measure that I went to B’teddin at the time I did; and the Pasha, by his own free-will and pleasure, gave me, as he expressed it, three, public demonstrations, a thing he had never done for any one else. And now he came in the most gracious way to read to me a letter which he had just received from the Grand Vizier, Fuad Pasha. I sat thinking of the wonderful past, when he suddenly came up and asked what made me look sad, when such a letter as he had read to me must be highly gratifying to my *amour propre*. I said, as he desired to know my thoughts, it was the retrospect of God’s wonderful loving dealings in regard to Zachleh and Deir el Kamar that overcame me; that we had been much in prayer that God would overrule these difficulties for the good of those places, and *that* with the approbation of himself; and that now, as on many former occasions, God had proved Himself a hearer of prayer.

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA

CHAPTER 10

THE year 1868, as it was the last year during which the devoted foundress of the Syrian schools was permitted in the providence of God fully to superintend her work, was, in the rapid development and extension of the schools, without parallel in any previous year. Almost prophetic of her own approaching separation from her children in the faith are the opening words of our beloved sister in reviewing the work of this year. "While looking round on the rapidity with which important openings for the Gospel follow one on the other, the mind is strongly impressed with the conviction that the time of our redemption draweth nigh," and that 'He who shall come, will come quickly.' Ours may be but a brief working day to prepare a people for their Lord. While men are slumbering and sleeping, the angel may lift up his voice that time shall be no longer.'

The most important extensions of the work accomplished in this year were the establishment of schools at Damascus and Zachleh and the building

a wing for the Moslem school at Beirut. But before giving Mrs. Thompson's graphic reports of the establishment and progress of the new schools, it may be well to pass in review, very shortly, some of the older schools, that our readers may by this glance have some idea of the many ramifications and the vast extension of the work. In order to this, we shall give short extracts from Mrs. Thompson's Reports of these schools, as forwarded by her in the beginning of 1869, the last earthly reports she was permitted to make.

First comes the *Elementary School*, of which she writes:

"This school, into which are drafted the children of the Infant School and where they are prepared for higher classes in the institution, still continues to enjoy the loving superintendence of Sara Sabra.

"When quite a girl, Sara began the work of teacher in this school and still continues the same as the wife of our valued master, Mualim Georgius.

"She is aided by other native teachers, while her little girl Louisa is running about or listening with delight at her side to the singing. The numbers in this school have been decreased by the removal of the elder girls into the day class of the Institution.

"At one time our faint hearts feared the great enemy would destroy this favourite school and that of the Infants, by the establishment of a French Free Day School in our close vicinity by the Sisters of St. Josef.

"As several of them had been drawn away, some of the teachers went to look after the little flock and, on entering the beautiful large marble Lewan, were most courteously received by the French nuns

"The teachers recognized several of their children and the nun with great tact said, 'Come, children and kiss your teacher's hand;' and then with true French politeness began to flatter the teachers, telling them what an admirable foundation they had laid in the education of these children, adding: 'It is no trouble to teach them to read, they are so well disciplined!'

INFANT SCHOOL

The nuns then invited the teachers into the balcony, to enjoy the views of the Lebanon and after presenting coffee, wished them good-morning, saying that, as they had been so polite as to call upon them, they would not fail to return their visit! This act of interest on the part of the teachers for their flock brought most of them back, so that of those belonging to the Elementary School only one has remained with the French nuns and our number in daily attendance is more than sixty, with the prospect of increase.”

Sara Sabra, the mistress writes:

“We have now the advantage of an Arabic master to teach our two first classes writing, which is so much admired in this our country. And then singing lessons also will do them much good. We have three classes learning English; they are very fond of that beautiful language. In the afternoon all the children learn needlework, while one of the teachers repeats to them hymns, which they say after her. We have four girls of the Catholic religion and forty Greeks; the rest are Mohammedans.

“They all attend the Sunday School, for which kind friends in England, I should think, will like to send picture cards to snake the children glad and to teach them hymns and texts.

INFANT SCHOOL

“The importance of Infant Schools can perhaps be nowhere better appreciated than in this country. The want of discipline at home increases the teachers’ work tenfold; and while the children are quick to learn, they are so erratic in their habits, that line upon line and precept upon precept are more called for here than in our own land. The difficulties of systematic instruction, too, are greater, since the young native teacher needs the plodding perseverance of our western females. Hence I was especially glad to welcome Miss Adie, who came out under the auspices of the Female Education Society, to carry out my long-cherished desire of forming an

MISSION PUPIL-TEACHERS

Infant School on our best English model.

“The value of our Infant School has been favourably tested, by the desire for knowledge awakened in their mothers, by the recitation and singing of their little ones at home. The infantile dialogues, carefully composed by our Arabic superintendent, with a view of instilling moral and religious principles into the minds of the parents, perhaps even more than into those of the children, are listened to with great interest. Thus, on a recent occasion, when it would have been out of place for an elder girl to read or recite, we brought up two infants to repeat a little dialogue between two children on going to school, before the Pasha and his lady, who listened with the greatest interest and told their own little Children, who were standing by, to listen to these words of truth out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. The number in daily attendance is about a hundred.

MISSION PUPIL-TEACHERS

“It is with peculiar satisfaction that we can now report that no less than fifteen of our young pupil-teachers are engaged in teaching at our Branch Schools; others elsewhere. This, of course, is a great loss to our Institution, as thus our first class is broken up. Nevertheless, their present occupation is more important and as soon as we have brought on others we shall recall some of these for further training. Of these dear girls two are in Damascus; three at Zachleh; two at Ain Zahalteh; two at the Olive-Branch; one at Ashrafia; one at East Coombe; two at Musaitbeh; one at Jerusalem, in Bishop Gobat’s school; one at Cairo, with clear Miss Whately.

THE NORMAL TRAINING INSTITUTE

“Is beginning more and more to carry out its design of raising up a body of native teachers; we have, however, to lay the foundation in children and must therefore, for some time to come, rely for their training upon the experience and influence of European teachers.

THE NORMAL TRAINING INSTITUTION

“There was a General Examination of all the British Syrian Schools during the month of July. That of the Normal Training School occupied the three days of the 7th, 8th, 9th July and excited great interest among the natives. On the last day there were above 1,180 visitors, among whom were the Pasha of Beirut, the Mufti and many other Moslems and also His Excellency Franco Pasha, the new Governor-General of the Lebanon. The examination was in Arabic, English and French, in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, grammar, history, geography, arithmetic, the piano, singing, etc.; while the modest, self-possessed manlier of the girls gave much satisfaction. The Mufti, in a long address, said, ‘With these schools has begun the regeneration of Syria.’ Indeed, the Moslem gentlemen were so pleased that they begged to have a special private examination for the benefit of the Mohammedan ladies, which was accordingly arranged for the following Thursday. The premises were cleared of all the men and two black eunuchs were stationed at the gate to keep guard. The ladies arrived, closely shrouded in white sheets, or izars, which, on laying aside, disclosed the richest diamond ornaments. They sat for three hours listening with the greatest interest and were very unwilling to leave at the appointed time. They were charmed to see and hear their children and young relatives and several expressed a desire to come here as boarders, provided we had secluded rooms.”

Extracts from visitors’ book:

BRITISH SYRIAN SCHOOLS, BEIRUT, JULY, 1868

“Since I was in Beirut eight years ago, I have not seen any-thing like what I have now witnessed here in regard to the growth of education and the spread of knowledge. Therefore my admiration is great in regard to what have seen in this useful school, touching the success of the daughters of Syria in languages, sciences and morality, by the care of its honourable head, Mrs. Thompson. Therefore I offer to her my hearty

NATIVE VISITORS' TESTIMONY

thanks for her care in spreading education in the right direction - teaching the children of all sects, without distinction; and I have been pleased in that I have seen them being brought up in unity and love; and as these young girls must one day be mothers, they will, without doubt, impart to their children the same good principles. Hence unity and civilization will become general under the shadow of His Majesty the Sultan's rule.

"I feel especially obliged to Mrs. Thompson for her desire to teach the Arabic - instructing in Arabic, which is their native language. I know that this school will be very valuable to Syria and I congratulate Beirut on having it."

NUSRI FRANCO, GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE LEBANON

"I repeat my congratulations to Mrs. Thompson for the great success. The visitors of these schools cannot but prove grand satisfaction. I hope that their gracious attentions will continue and I or my successors will see or hear the same progress in these flourishing schools."

M. KHAMIL, GOVERNOR OF BEIRUT

"Praise to God, Creator of mankind, which He gifted with the mind, adorned with eloquence and sweet speech! He has surely most graciously conferred on man the best gifts, teaching him what he did not know.

"The undersigned visited the school of Mrs. Thompson, by invitation, at the examination. I witnessed the good conferred on the girls - their accomplishments in languages - one tongue to each person - some advanced in grammar and literature and others in composition, arithmetic and the Scriptures and the various arts befitting the fair secluded sex. I am gratified to find so much zeal and exertion displayed by this lady at the head of the Institution for promoting education and to whom I wish every success in the glorious days of our exalted sovereign, with the blessings of the Almighty and Omniscient, who hears prayers."

THE MUFTI OF BEIRUT

NATIVE VISITORS' TESTIMONY

"I have been invited to the Institution for the Education of Girls at Beirut, under the direction of the respected Mrs. Bowen Thompson.

"What I saw surpassed my expectation, - the progress in manners, accomplishments, learning and the various classes of knowledge. In fact, the blind competed with those enjoying the blessing of sight, to my astonishment and that of those who attended the annual examination. The pupils in general are successful; every one among them answered the questions. It may please the Almighty to unite the whole mankind into one family. I cheerfully record my gratitude to the lady directress of the Institution. May her life be long to continue in the sphere of usefulness!"

SEID SELIM RAMADAN, MINISTER OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

"I attended the annual examination of the College and witnessed the degree attained by the girls in knowledge and literature; the attention bestowed by the teachers, especially by the lady, the worthy directress of the Institution. I was animated with deep gratitude and on leaving the premises I record my thanks for the exertions of the lady aforesaid. The progress the pupils are making is as evident as the sun at noon. I pray that the Almighty be pleased to render the College and other similar establishments means for good and to enable this lady, Mrs. Thompson, long to be successful in the prosecution of the work in which she is engaged for the public good."

ABDUL REHIM BEDRAN

"Praise to God alone! Having, by invitation, assisted at the annual examination of the girls' school, I witnessed the progress they have made. So deeply was I impressed, that tears would have gushed from my eyes from joy; for to teach the female useful knowledge is a boon that no wise man can despise. May God repay the highly respected Mrs. Thompson and bestow on her all desired success and prosper the goodly object of her pursuit! I was moved to admiration by what I have seen in these schools."

HUSSEIN EFFENDI BEYHOUM

NATIVE VISITORS' TESTIMONY

"At the annual examination of the girls' school, to which I was invited, I have seen the effects of civilization and culture that I did not witness before, especially as regards the arrangements and order in these schools. Mrs. Thompson deserves all thanks for all she has done under this line."

OTMAN BE MOM [PRINCIPAL MOSLEM BANKER]

"By invitation of the directress, we attended this school. I am indebted for her kindness and admire the order of the institution."

HAIL MADAWAR

"Highly am I delighted with this school for girls! Admirably have they replied to the questions proposed; and astonished the minds of all present.

"Continuously do I offer my grateful thanks to her whose name is the sweetest perfume that sheds fragrance on our assemblies?"

"No longer is there a doubt that the education of our girls is the best means for the advancement of our country.

"May they not cease - those lovely gardens of knowledge - to be fruitful in every virtue, under His Highness the Sultan of the World!

"May God bless his high Excellence Rashid and increase the beauty of Beirut by Khanil!"

**COMPOSED DURING THE EXAMINATION OF THE
BRITISH SYRIAN FEMALE COLLEGE,
BY KHASIN EFFENDI BAYRUN AND READ ALOUD
BY ORDER OF THE MUFTI, JULY 9TH, 1808, IN THE PRESENCE
OF KHAMIL PASHA OF BEIRUT.**

THE MOSLEMS

"Oh that Ishmael might live before Thee!"

The work of education among the Moslem females is most encouraging. Although from the time of the admission of our first Moslem pupil, Aishé, more than seven years ago, we have always had the satisfaction of numbering Moslem girls among our pupils in the Day School, yet it is only within the last two years that the parents have confided their children to us as boarders. The love of instruction was strikingly manifested by some of our young Moslem girls of the upper classes, just emerging from childhood into the bloom of girlhood. The time of betrothal might not be deferred beyond the age of ten or eleven years, after which they could not come to an open school without an infringement of propriety; and at the request of these young girls and their parents a secluded schoolroom within the precincts of the Institution was speedily arranged and the plan succeeded admirably. By the liberality of friends in England, additional rooms have been built and thus we are enabled to give increasing advantages to these young ladies and to set at rest the minds of their parents that they will not be exposed to any but female intercourse.

"The same restriction of seclusion does not apply so strictly to the poorer Mohammedans, but in proportion to the wealth or position of the father is the rigidity of the seclusion. The education of the children has not only aroused the desire for light among the mothers, but drew from one of the most learned and wealthy of the Mohammedans the memorable expression, 'On the education of the girls depends the welfare of the country.'

"This liberality of mind is shared by some of the most enlightened of the Effendis, many of whom requested that their ladies, who of course could not be visible at the public examination, might be privileged to have a private one, that they might see the progress of their children: some of them wept

and wished that they were young again, that they might have the enjoyment of coming to school. On one occasion, as one of our little tots was repeating the following hymn:

*'God is in heaven, can He hear
A little prayer like mine?'*

and the other replied,

*'Yes, thoughtful child, thou need'st not fear,
He listeneth to thine.'*

The ladies listened with intense interest and the elder one, stooping forward and embracing the children, said, "The darlings! They know more than I. May they say it again? Oh, lady, is it right that we are kept in such ignorance? The younger one afterwards came up to me and said, I am determined I will not remain in ignorance any longer. Every day, when the Effendi is gone to the seraglio, I will put on my izar and come to the school.' I told her this would never do, but advised her to ask the Effendi whether he would allow one of our teachers to come to the hareem every day and teach her to read. The Effendi was delighted with the proposal and by the daily visit of one of our Bible-women she is now able to read a little in the First Arabic Spelling-book.

"On one occasion a young unmarried lady said to one of our teachers, whom she met in a Moslem hareem: 'Oh, why have you never been to see me? I have been unhappy ever since I saw the children at the school. My father is willing that I should learn; but he says it would be a disgrace for me to go out of the house; and asked me, Had I ever seen one of our people at my

age (seventeen years) go to school? We cannot get on by ourselves; we never hear anything that is going on, or see people who have travelled. *Really, really*, we are like the donkeys!' The teacher replied, 'No, you are more honourable than a donkey; you have intelligence and wish to learn and you are not too old to be taught.' 'To school I cannot go; but I will tell you what I will do. My father is going on a pilgrimage to Mecca; if Mrs. Thompson would be so kind as to send me a teacher here, I would try to be able to read by the time he returns.' This, however, could not be done, as one of the rules I have laid down for myself is to do nothing secretly, but enforce upon their minds the duty of wives to their husbands and the other no less important precept of Children, obey your parents in the Lord.' We have only one course, that of asking the Lord to open the way and incline the fathers to sanction Zenana's visiting.

"Another interesting fact, illustrating the desire among the Moslem women for education by woman's mission, must not pass over. In the course of last summer, several Mohammedan ladies, some of whose children are in our schools, paid me a long visit. They desired a school in the Mohammedan quarter and offered to provide a room. The request could not then be complied with; but, like the importunate widow, they applied again and again, determined not to take a refusal. During the holidays they were visited almost daily by one of our pupil - teachers, who, with her sister (formerly a member of our women's school), had a peculiar desire and aptness to work among the Moslems. Sometimes she would come with a request that I would go with her to see them, or appoint a day that they could come here; at the same time putting into my hand a long list of names of females who wished to be taught. Resolving in our own mind not to add another sphere of labour to the work which is already beyond our power of personal superintendence, I nevertheless went one afternoon, accompanied by two of our pupil-teachers.

MOSLEM LADIES

Here, amidst the seclusion of mulberry gardens are many Moslem houses, some belonging to the rich, but chiefly to the poor. We went to the abode of one of the former and were met by the owner, a fine-looking woman of about thirty. She embraced me in the Oriental fashion; kissing first the right and then the left cheek and taking a rose out of a vase standing on the table, she presented it with Eastern grace. She expressed her surprise that I had so long delayed returning her visit. While sweetmeats and coffee were handed round, many of her Moslem neighbours came in and seated themselves on the divan and floor. They all pleaded for the establishment of a school in this place. I asked why they did not send their children to our school either at Musaitbeh, or to the Institution. Their significant reply was, 'We want a school, not for our children only, but for ourselves.' They then explained that it would be impossible for them to attend any school across the public road, or indeed beyond the Mohammedan quarter. I was particularly struck with the intelligent countenance and neat dress of one of the ladies. I asked her, 'Could not she come to the Institution?' She was silent; but others remarked, 'She did belong to your school, but now she is *too* old; it would be a shame for her to go: she is married.' Upon further inquiry, the young lady said her husband was very willing that she should continue her learning, but that he would not allow her to go beyond her own district. The ladies then offered to show me the room selected by them for the proposed school; but by this time it was getting dark - the rain was beginning to fall, while we, moreover, were unprovided with umbrellas - so I rose to make the best of our way home: but she would take no denial. One of them, drawing her skirt over her head to protect her against the rain, asked us to do the same; while another, dressed in full pink silk trousers and tunic, her head and neck ornamented with large gold coins, took me by the hand and, bravely leading the way under dripping trees and over pools of water, brought us to the house of Islu. Dear

MOSLEM LADIES SCHOOL

friends, what could I do but give an assent to their earnest pleading? They offered to have the room cleaned and, by the help of a few mats, benches, table and chairs, the self-constructed Moslem School was in operation the next morning and our dear active girls, the teachers of their own choosing, in full work.

“I thought it best not to say too much about this new school, lest after a time their ardour should relax, or their relatives refuse to sanction their attendance. Happily, neither the one nor the other has occurred. At first some of the women desired to come to school merely to be taught to sew; but on their being told that none would be allowed to come who did not learn to read, they brought in their hand the price of a spelling-book. The numbers in daily attendance are forty-three children and thirty women. Besides those who attend regularly there are others who come in for an hour or two, as their occupations may permit. They have already learnt several hymns and texts and, what is still more important, the efficacy of prayer.

“Lately, when Miss Hamilton visited the Moslem Sunday School, she found them in great trouble. The conscription was to take place that afternoon and the lots would be decided the next day. They asked her to beg Mrs. Thompson to pray for them; and when she and the teachers knelt down to spread their sorrows before the Lord, the women, though they could understand only the prayer that was offered up in Arabic, expressed themselves most thankful and sent word again to beg that we would pray for them. Of them, also, we trust it may soon be said in truth, ‘Behold, she prayeth.’”

MOSLEM SCHOOLS

“Rome was not built in a day; and thus, while we had hoped that our new building would have sprung up with the rapidity of the response from English friends, we have had a waiting time of much inconvenience.

The rainy season, having set in earlier than usual, not only retarded the work, but so thoroughly soaked the walls and floors of the roofless wing, that up to this time we cannot, with safety place any beds in the new dormitories.

“The new additions will greatly add to the comfort and convenience of all parties; but until this day the operations of the workmen and the cold air rushing in at various quarters; have obliged me to shift the classes from one room to another. This is a great trial to the patience of the teachers, but all have borne it admirably and after a few weeks I trust the school will present a more favourable aspect. The interest of the Mohammedan parents in the education of their children is very encouraging, yet at the same time there is considerable difficulty in meeting some of their requirements and being true to ourselves. At one time they desired that a blind Sheikh should come daily and teach them to read with vowels. We accordingly had his mat spread in a corner of the room and a locked closet wherein to deposit his books; but after teaching the children about a month, the parents consented to withdraw him, as they found two of our Mohammedan pupils could read as distinctly and correctly with the vowels as he did.

Sometime ago, when many of the learned Mohammedans were assembled together, one of the gentlemen present inquired of the Great Sheikh whether it was right to send their children to Christian schools. The Sheikh replied, ‘We may do so in safety to the English school.’ Once, on entering the house of one of the first Moslems, his daughter-in-law held up her infant of a month old, saying, ‘This is your child; her father says she shall go to your school as soon as she is four years old.’ The family were soon assembled and one of them, who is in our school, ran to fetch her grandfather, the Great Sheikh before alluded to. He spoke with delight of the improvement in the young people of his family who are in our school. And when his daughter pleaded whether she might not also sleep in the house, he shook his head, saying, I run afraid that you ought

BOY'S SCHOOL

not to even to be in the school any longer.' This young lady has been betrothed some time, but her love for her school is so great that she strives to defer the day of her marriage. A person present gave the children some sugar-plums ; they began quarrelling and fighting about them, when our young teacher, who accompanied me, rose quietly and told them to divide them equally, which they at once did cheerfully. Turning to us, the Effendi exclaimed, Mashallah Wonderful! How nicely she keeps them in order!' He then begged us to receive his two little grandsons, one about five years and the other seven. This was readily granted; but we were astonished to hear that the little Ali, aged seven, who came next morning, was betrothed to the infant in the cradle whom we saw on entering."

BOY'S SCHOOL

"The Boys School contains ninety boys, of whom ten are Protestants, fifty-six Greeks, four Catholics, eight Maronites and twelve Druses. Its place and situation is quite different now from what it used to be. The house which we have lately taken is a very suitable one, with a fine view of the town, the white-walled and red-roofed houses standing among mulberry gardens, altogether forming a very picturesque sight; and behind this is Mount Lebanon, with its numerous villages, raising its magnificent snow-crowned head.

"The different branches are Bible-reading and history, which are treated as the most important; Arabic, grammar, arithmetic, geography, writing and singing; English; also French.

"Most of the boys are very regular in their attendance, both at the Day and Sunday School, diligent and industrious.

"Some of the former pupils have left and are engaged as clerks, shopkeepers, press-workers, etc.; many continue to attend the Protestant service. Several have been removed to the Protestant College at Abeih and others to Mr. Bistani's school."

SCHOOLS NEAR BEIRUT

EAST COOMBE, HEIGH RUMAIL

“The increasing demand for instruction in French among the pupils of the first class obliged me to make some arrangement for their better tuition, as otherwise they would be removed to the French sisters, where some have already gone as day pupils.

“The children of this school, who are mostly of the upper classes, have made so much progress in needle-work that the teacher is enabled to take in a good deal of work from their mothers, the payment for which goes towards her salary. As the daily attendance is above a hundred, an additional assistant-teacher is indispensable.”

WEST COOMBE, HEIGH RUMAIL

“This school numbers seventy-five. During the three years of its existence it has made very fair progress under its youthful teacher, in whose father’s house it is still held. The instruction is of an elementary character and as yet English has not been introduced, being chiefly for children of a poorer class. They all pay a trifle.”

ASHRAFIA

“Is a picturesque suburb east of Beirut, situated on the romantic spur of Lebanon, overlooking the Mediterranean near the Nahr el Keib. Its inhabitants are, for the most part, poor and ignorant, having had scarcely any evangelical teaching till the establishment of our school; the work has been very uphill, though not the less successful.

“The group of ten children first taught by Muri and Miriam soon outstripped their teachers. These young sisters, who so faithfully discharged their office, are now engaged in other spheres, the one as the wife of a worthy young tradesman, the other as the faithful assistant in Miss Whately’s household and school at Cairo.

“Shehene B. is going on steadily in her work, assisted by the Countess

OLIVE-BRANCH SCHOOL

of Gainsborough's protégée; the former teacher, Susan Assad, having been married to a young Protestant. The wedding took place at the Institution, by the Rev. Dr. Jessup, in the presence of the pupils and the friends of both parties; he gave the young couple an appropriate and valuable address. They were presented with a handsome Arabic Bible and the bride with a well-furnished work-box, sent by friends from England. Mrs. George Milner, to whose liberality Susan has been indebted for the finishing of her education, has kindly offered to continue the same stipend for Mokhtara, or any other sphere of work to which Susan may be appointed. The Sunday School and services, formerly held by native teachers, are now conducted by a European gentleman who is much interested in the spiritual welfare of the inhabitants of Syria."

OLIVE BRANCH, RAS BEIRUT

"The Summer Examination of this school was held in the garden, under the shade of the new verandah, for the erection of which we are indebted, in part, to Lady Maria Forester and Miss Copley.

"The examination was very good and showed that the children were getting in advance of the assistant-teachers; we therefore gave Sitt Estinaz the aid of an Arabic grammar and writing-master and appointed two of our young people from the Institution to take the school daily.

"The school has increased from 70 to 100 and greatly improved in its whole tone and demands are made for additional desks and benches. It would gratify the early friends to see the present condition of this little nursery of Jewish, Moslem and Christian children.

"On their return from the school one afternoon the pupil-teachers told us, in great concern, that the mother of two of our Jewish children had died that morning. It was evening before we could go down to Ras Beirut. Accompanied by their teacher, Sitt Estinaz, we went to the house of

SCENE OF SORROW

mourning. It was a fine mansion and the door was opened by a servant, who did not speak, but motioned us to walk upstairs. On entering the marble hall, all was silence save that a woman was walking to and fro, trying to hush an infant in her arms. Another servant noiselessly opened the door of a large apartment, where a number of Jewish ladies and gentlemen were seated, in mute grief, on the ground. Our poor little Rica was lying fast asleep from sorrow: her mother had been buried before sunset! They rose as we entered: the father, like his little daughter, was leaning against the wall, fast asleep. The mother and sister of the departed burst into tears and, embracing us, made us sit down beside them. The room was furnished with divans; but nearly all were seated on the floor, in token of mourning.

“After a while a wailing woman broke in upon the painful silence, uttering short sentences expressive of the virtues of the deceased and the grief of the survivors. Upon this a singular scene commenced: the ladies rapidly threw their hands up and down, as if they were casting dust into the air; and then taking their long veils, imitated the action of rending them, uttering at the same time piteous ejaculations of lamentation and woe. When this had continued for some time, one of the gentlemen quietly begged them to desist, which they immediately did. The father, who was now awake, seemed solaced by the expression of our sympathy; and Sitt Estinaz gave them a short account of her last interview with the deceased, whom she had visited in her sickness, when she asked many interesting questions on the subject of religion. Her sister said that she was in the habit of hearing the children read the Bible every Sunday and that only the day before yesterday she had heard them repeat their texts, on their return from the Sunday School. Their father wept much and said to us, ‘Will you take care of my children? Their mother is gone; will you be a mother to them?’ Silently we rose to leave, thankful that the dear children were in our school and had perhaps been permitted to

BLACKHEATH SCHOOL

bring some text of redemption to their mother's ear and heart.

"We feel more and more convinced of the blessing of Sunday Schools at our different stations and trust that our friends at home, at their Sabbath School gatherings, will ask for a special blessing on our Olive-Branch. Evidently a spirit of inquiry is at work among the Jews and former prejudices are passing away."

BLACKHEATH, MUSAITEBEH

"We have given this school the name of Blackheath because it is in part supported by the congregation of our former beloved pastor, the Rev. Joseph Fenn and by the contributions of the young women's Bible-class. The new house was opened on April 25th by our beloved and venerated friend Bishop Gobat, who addressed the children, taking for his text, 'Behold the Lamb of God.' The Bishop then with his own hands gave each child an orange and expressed his delight at so many adults and young people being taught on the Sabbath-day by the preaching of Mualim Georgius and others. Our lamented friend the late Colonel Churchill was also present. The importance of a school in this suburb is the more evident from the fact of its rapid extension and its being inhabited by numbers of masons and muleteers, whose strong Maronite and Greek prejudices opposed the introduction of a Protestant School at the time of the massacre. There are many Christians in this district and near the coast are nestled numbers of wretched people, who can scarcely yet be said to have been reached by evangelical teaching.

"Among these the Bible-woman goes occasionally, though her visits are chiefly confined to the vicinity of the school and the Moslem district."

SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND

"Among the rich fruits which we have been permitted to gather in this past

SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND

year, perhaps the most abundant for the time of its growth is the School for the Blind at Beirut, with an offshoot at Damascus, a 'little one' at Sidon and now a prayer for one at Antioch. Of the blind of Syria it may be emphatically said they were as sheep without a shepherd and it needed only the guiding crook to bring them into the outward fold.

"The desire to alleviate the sufferings of the blind, by teaching them to read the Gospel for themselves, first suggested itself to the mind of Mr. Mott by a little blind girl at Baalbec, during a visit to those splendid ruins in the summer of 1866, with his friend the Rev. David Fenn, of Tinnevely. The first consideration was to prepare the Arabic version of the Gospel of St. John in the embossed type adopted by Mr. Moon.

"Having completed the Gospel, Mr. Mott opened the School for the Blind in February, 1868, in presence of Mr. and Mrs. Eli Jones, Mr. Lloyd Fox and other friends. All the pupils were equally ignorant, with the exception of a young Druse girl and two little Christian children, who had learnt the system at our Infant School.

"The preparation of a portion of the Word of God for the blind, in their own language, at this juncture was the more remarkable, from the fact that in the summer of 1867 ophthalmia raged in various towns in Syria and more especially in Beirut and along the sea-coast, almost to the degree of a plague and it was calculated that about 2,000 persons, old and young, lost their sight. Untold misery was thus entailed, not only upon the poor sufferers themselves, but upon their families. It was affecting to enter some of their houses and to see in one a fine young man or woman, in another a father, who not long before was the stay and staff of his family, now become their burden; while in another house was a fond mother lamenting over two and sometimes even over three, of her children of tender years, all alike become totally blind and helpless.

THE BLIND

“The results of this school, which has now been in operation a twelvemonth, manifestly proves that it was of the Lord. By the help of a painstaking native, whom Mr. Mott had first to teach the system, various contrivances were suggested.

“Among the first pupils was a young Druse, who, like the others, was destitute of spiritual as well as physical sight. No sooner did his fingers touch the beautiful words of the Gospel than his whole soul was filled with delight. He could not part with his beloved Gospel of John; it was his study by day and by night; it lay under his pillow. He had, as it were, acquired a new sense and his energetic mind at once expanded to grasp the large sphere thus unexpectedly brought within his power. His zeal outstripped that of all the rest; and while some of his fellow-scholars could scarcely decipher a few verses, he had learnt to read with fluency and committed various portions of the Scriptures to memory. And now the words of light and truth penetrated his heart and the work of the Spirit was soon manifested in his daily walk. He was very anxious to learn English and on my asking him the reason, he replied, ‘When Mr. Molt brings English gentlemen, I can’t understand what they say; but when their words are translated, they are so different to the words of other people, they are so Christian.’ On one occasion an English traveller asked him whether he did not feel the loss of sight. He replied, ‘How can you ask me? it is miserable not to see and once I was miserable; but now laying his hand on the Gospel and his countenance brightening up “now I am happy, since I have learnt to read the Bible and know about Jesus. Of course I should like to see the sun, which makes me so warm, but this cannot be; but when I get to heaven, the first person I shall see will be Jesus, for He will open mine eyes.” His desire to lead others to the Saviour is a further evidence of the renewed state of his soul. Not only is he a regular attendant at the Protestant service twice on the Lord’s-day, but he has also brought his

THE BLIND DRUSE

brother - a Druse, as he once was, but now an inquirer. During the summer Mr. Mott sent for him to the mountains, to teach a blind woman to read and, short as was his stay, he left a very decided impression that he, who was once a Druse, is now a true disciple of Christ."

THE SCHOOL FOR CRIPPLES

"A few of these poor wretched outcasts are now brought under Gospel teaching in a distinct schoolroom in the town, hired for the purpose for three years by Mr. Mott, who is having it fitted up at his own expense. Here the poor, the maimed, the halt, assemble and are taught to read the Bible in their native language. Sometimes Ghandoor, the blind Druse, reads the Scriptures with them, as may be seen in the little photograph. As all of them are beggars, they cannot afford to lose even half a day, so that we have thought it best to allow them three pounds of flour a week each. Those who are quite helpless are brought in a sort of little low cart by a deaf and dumb man."

Mr. Macgregor, during his well-known travels in the Rob Roy, visited these schools and examined them. We make no apology for the following extract from his journal:

"But there are several branch schools besides at mountain outposts in connection with the head-quarters of Mrs. Thompson's work in Beirut. These, or some of them, I hope to see. A very interesting, but very difficult work has also been commenced for the blind and one for the maimed, as well as that for the hapless orphans and the ignorant. Mr. Mott's little class of blind men reading is a sight indeed for those who have eyes. Only in February last that poor blind fellow who sits on the form there was utterly ignorant. See how his delicate fingers run over the raised types of his Bible; and he reads aloud and blesses God in his heart for the precious news and for those who

VISIT OF MR. MACGREGOR

gave him the new avenue for truth to his heart. 'Jesus Christ will be the first person I shall ever see,' he says; 'for my eyes will be opened in heaven.' Thus even this man becomes a missionary.

"Down in that dark room, again, below the printing press of the American Mission (for he needs no sunlight in his work), you will find him printing the Bible in raised type, letter by letter, for his sightless brethren. This is one of the most impressive wonders I have ever looked at. As we leave the place, some of the maimed and lame and halt scramble along the road to their special class for a lesson, so that all kinds of suffering are provided for and the mission of Christians is following closely in the actual personal work which He, the great Missioner Himself, described as His mission to mankind."

This graphic scene has been placed before our English eyes by an interesting photograph representing the actual personages in the above sketch. Here sits blind Ghandoor, whose sightless eyes are looking upward in faith to Him whom he expects to see eye to eye When he hears the welcome Ephphatha. This humble Druse is full of practical ideas. He not only prints and corrects the press, as Mr. Macgregor describes, but he has also invented a method for communicating some of his favourite texts to his sightless brethren in the kindred school at Damascus. Nor are his sympathies restricted to his own class. He was among the first who commenced reading the Scriptures to the halt, the lame and the crippled who throng the highways at Beirut. The words of Jesus' love came with irresistible power and sweetness to their desolate hearts, nor did they rest till their blind guides had prevailed upon their generous friend to open a school for the cripples.

Another upturned face rivets our eye. We ask his story - a dear boy of gentle mien, who, having been present with other blind pupils at the large annual examination of Mrs. Thompson's school, replied in unconscious

ANECDOTES OF THE BLIND

simplicity to the questions of the astonished Turkish officials: I am a little blind boy. Once I could see; but then I fell asleep - a long, long sleep - I thought I should never wake. And I slept till a kind gentleman called Mr. Mott came and opened my eyes - 'not these eyes,' pointing to his sightless eyeballs, 'but *these*,' lifting up his tiny fingers - 'these eyes: and oh! they see such sweet words of Jesus and how He loved the blind.' Another near him, placing his fingers first on his poor blind eyes and then on his heart, said, 'It is dark here; but it is light there!'

There were few in that large assembly who were not affected, even to tears.

We now turn to another beautifully executed photograph - the cripples' school - in which the happy Ghandoor is reading the words of Jesus to the halt and withered. They have gained their Point - above sixty assembled in the room provided by Mr. Mott. Indeed, it was the blind who led and in many instances carried, these impotent folk to the school to hear the sweet words about Jesus. On one occasion above sixty of these outcasts were collected, one being carried a distance of six miles. Here the 'old, old story' of Jesus healing the lame, the halt and the sinner, was read to them; and when they were told the service was over and it was time to go, they set up one piteous cry, 'Dachelih, dachelih - let us stay to hear more sweet words.'

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA
CHAPTER 11

NO part of the great evangelistic work of Mrs. Thompson seemed at first sight so difficult, no door of access so fast closed, as that which barred entrance to the Jews and Moslems of Damascus. Yet we have already seen how the finger of God was displayed in the removal of obstacles - how it unmistakably beckoned to the Missionary of her sex 'Come over and help us,' - and how, of all that she was the honoured means of accomplishing, nothing filled her with such overflowing joy and gratitude as this, her last, her crowning - we may almost add, her greatest work.

In one of her very latest letters, in February, 1869, she writes thus on Damascus:

"The establishment of St. Paul's School, Damascus, may be regarded as our crowning mercy. For more than twenty-five years, when the late Sir Culling Eardley procured for that ancient city the blessings of a medical missionary, Damascus has been the subject of prayer and hope.

CALL TO DAMASCUS

“God’s ancient people, beloved for the Father’s sake, have a peculiar, if not a primary claim upon our sympathy and efforts. The city of Damascus too the most ancient in the world and endeared to us by so many scriptural associations - has an attraction peculiar to itself. The refinement and seclusion of its women, the beauty of the girls, their Oriental costume and habits, all impress the mind of the stranger and awaken the yearning desire that these too may be ‘a crown of glory, a royal diadem in the hand of our God.’

In her more detailed account of the progress of St. Paul’s School, Damascus, after it had been a year in operation, Mrs. B. Thompson writes: - “The children who applied for admittance were chiefly of the upper classes, who readily fell in with our plan of paying separately, though but a trifle, for the various branches of education.

The greater proportion of the children were those of Jewish parents, who were quite bent upon coining, especially those who had before been in our Olive-Branch School in Beirut. Some of the principal Jews came several mornings at the opening of the school with a portion of Scripture, singing a hymn and a prayer chiefly expressed in the words of the psalmist. One of them asked for a copy of our Bible, as the Rabbi wished to compare the translation with their own Hebrew Scriptures. That he was satisfied may be taken for granted, as he not only continued to send his own children to the school, but brought some of his young relations.

“The progress and happiness of the children - their beauty, intelligence and affection - surpassed all I had seen in any other school. At first some of the Christian children did not like to be associated with the Jewesses; but this speedily wore off and, except by the peculiar cast of feature, it was difficult to say which was a Christian and which a Jewish maiden, as the children were seated side by side.

The prejudice against the Jews is very strong at Damascus and it was

humbling to see the superiority of the Jews in this respect, as the following anecdote will illustrate:

“One morning, when, in consequence of a Greek feast, many of the Christian children were absent, a lady came to place her daughter at the school. Looking around, she said, ‘These are all Jewesses; I thought you were going to open a Christian school. I do not like my children to mix with the Jews.’ The same morning a Jewish lady called with three of her daughters, two of whom had been in the Olive-Branch. She expressed her surprise that we had so few Christians and said she had hoped to find many there. ‘Let me tell you one thing,’ she observed; you will never succeed if you have a school for Jewish girls only.’ On my asking the reason, she replied, ‘The Christian girls are better behaved and neater in their dress.’ “

On the 10th of June Mrs. Thompson writes:

“The school already numbers above fifty children of the most respectable families, Jews and Greeks. The former preponderate. Our house and our forces will not enable us to take more than sixty and indeed this is ample for the commencement. This work is most manifestly of the Lord and, small as it is, has already given an impetus far beyond the circle immediately concerned. The stupor hanging over the female mind has been aroused and now they will never rest till they get education.

The Jewish community is the most alive to the necessity of shaking off the lethargy of ages. Every morning several Jewish ladies make their appearance, sometimes at sunrise, bringing their daughters with them and they lament their own inability to profit by these advantages. One of these mothers made many inquiries as to our religious views - pictures, images, saints, etc. - and finished by saying, ‘If your school *here* is to be like that at Beirut, I promise you twenty children of my own connexion; and indeed,’ she added; ‘you may have all our Jewish children.’ Several Turkish gentlemen also have asked me

TURKISH OFFICER

whether I would receive the Mohammedan girls and were delighted when assured it was open to all.

“Yet, with so much unexpected success, our God, as if to keep us from being unduly exalted, sees fit to send us many trials. Thus, for instance:

“A very respectable man called upon me with his grown-up daughter, to place her at our school. He told us that the day before the Roman Catholic priest had cursed us from the altar, as well as those who should send their children to the English school. The man stopped to speak to the Padre after service and told him it was wrong to curse us, that we were as good as other people and that, as regarded himself, he should take his daughter and place her at our school the next day.

“A young Turkish officer whom I met one day said he would give anything to learn English. He was twenty-three and his eldest child five years old. He would like her to come to school, but the distance was too great. He said the English thought it wrong to have more wives than one; he could have four. At present he had only two, one of whom was a Circassian, whom he had bought for £150. This led to the avowal of the fact that there is a regular slave-market at Damascus. Oh, what iniquities lie at our very threshold and we know it not! It is well, for it would crush every energy. Dear friends, let us take courage and buckle on our heavenly armour; and oh! may we get a firm hold of faith! for without strong, unwavering faith in the love and power of God, we are defenceless on all sides. We must look to you to provide with needful supplies your Damascus little one - born and cradled amidst difficulties and toil and want. It looks to you.

“And truly God is hearing and answering prayer. He has not only opened a great and effectual door in Damascus, so that, day by day, the number pressing for admission increases far beyond the limits of our small

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL, DAMASCUS

hired house, but has made it necessary to lengthen our cords and seek larger premises."

ACCOUNT OF EXAMINATION OF ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL,
FROM MRS. MENTOR MOIT.
DAMASCUS, SEPTEMBER 8, 1868

"I must confess that I was much surprised at the beautiful order of the school and little prepared for so charming an examination as that of St. Paul's School, which, as you will remember, commenced on the 1st of June. The parents of the pupils manifested much interest and, as the school premises were far too small, Mr. Consul Rogers procured for us the house of a Turkish Moslem Effendi and invited the Mustasarif Pasha, Reis Pasha and the local Governor, who honoured the examination with their presence. The crowd was so immense, of all the first people in Damascus that Mr. Consul Rogers provided the attendance of fifty gens-d'armes, who lined the narrow avenue leading to the house and closed the avenue with crossed bayonets. This was a most necessary precaution; for, though every available place was thronged, even to the balustrades on the house-tops, several hundreds belonging to the first families were still thronging for admittance.

"The progress of the pupils gave great satisfaction to the Turkish Effendis and officials, as also to the Jewish and Christian auditors. Very great credit is due to our indefatigable teachers. The singing was so sweet and altogether it was a charming examination, from the little darling girls in the Infant School to the tall graceful Jewish and other maidens of sixteen or seventeen. As usual, they were all dressed in white, with blue bands and hair-ribbon; all the frocks cut out and sewn in the school, those of the younger ones basted and made at home by their mothers.

"The Blind School, at the special request of Mr. Rogers, was also examined. Two of the men read very fairly John xiv.; the rest are in the alphabet and spelling. The brooms which they had made were exhibited. The females would not read

PROGRESS OF THE WORK

before so many gentlemen.

"The Turkish Effendi, in whose house the examination took place, permitted us to take the girls there the day before, that they might see the place and recite some of their lessons. The Effendi said, of course none but ladies could be admitted, as the Effendin and other ladies of the hareem would be present.

"At dinner, at the Consulate, we met a high Turkish functionary. Mr. Rogers inquired whether he thought that one in a thousand of the highest Turkish ladies could read? He seemed distressed at the question and said, 'Perhaps!'"

Mrs. Thompson writes:

"We did not move into our new house till the 21st of December, when I had the privilege of opening it, in company with Mr. John Macgregor; the Hon. Mrs. Digby joining us later in the day.

"The anniversary of the destruction of the Temple by Titus (A.D. 61). This memorable day in Jewish history is very solemnly observed by the Jews of Damascus. At the usual hour in the morning the children came to the school with their hair uncombed, their faces unwashed and their feet bare, having walked barefoot from their homes; their dress also, instead of being neat and pretty, was untidy and common, nor did they wear any jewels or ornaments as usual. It was a day of humiliation and fasting, even among the little ones. They did not know the prophecy that 'Israel was to abide many days without a king and without a prince and without a sacrifice and without an ephod and without a teraphim;' nor did they know that glorious promise that the Lord shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant.'

"The love of these dear girls for their school and teachers is very encouraging. One of them, a bright, intelligent little girl, on being asked why did she keep the servant waiting? replied, "There is no advantage in going

IN DAMASCUS

house; I do not profit there. Besides, my mother says I am no longer her child, but the child of the school.' This same child one evening asked permission of the teacher to sleep in the school, having first obtained her mother's leave and made no hesitation in taking her meals with us.

"Our Sunday School is very interesting: both Jewish and Christian children listen with interest to the Bible stories; and we sometimes read to them little books, such as 'Henry and his Bearer,' which have been translated into Arabic. In addition to this, many of the Christian children come on the Sunday morning to go with us to the Protestant service and sometimes get their parents to come also.

"In the summer, too, the Bible-women brought some of their lady and female pupils to join our Bible-class; but this was discontinued in the winter, in consequence of the sloppy state of the Damascus streets, which renders it almost impossible for females to get out. Like all Oriental women, they wrap themselves in snow-white izars, kind of sheet, which envelops the whole person and the slightest spot of mud would be a disgrace."

Mrs. Thompson further observes: "Having with much difficulty obtained larger premises, we are now in a position to open a school for the poor, in a large room at the side entrance, if the needed funds for fitting it up and defraying the expenses of the salary of a teacher and assistant can be provided."

Mrs. Thompson adds: "Before closing my introduction I must lay before you the following extraordinary appeal, which has just been placed in my hands by our Vice-Consul at Damascus. It is addressed to me by Ismail Atrash, the Prince of the Hauran, the first Druse prince after the house of Jumblatt. The school he begs for is in one of the ancient giant cities of Basilan. It was commenced some years ago by Mr. Consul Rogers, who paid the salary, etc.; but two years since Abdel Messieh, the teacher, left, as you will

INVITATION TO BASHAN

see from the letter and is now employed by us as Master of the Blind School at Damascus. I told him that it was an easy thing to open a school, but not so easy to superintend and carry it on efficiently; that we had no funds and had already more on our hands than it was possible to accomplish.

“The Consul said that Ismail himself was so much interested in the education of the Druses and so reliable a person, that Mr. Rogers had confided to him the entire management of the school. It is two days’ journey from Damascus.

“There is a real movement among the Druses. I earnestly submit this important subject to the consideration of the Committee.

“Honourable Lady, I had sent a petition to Rogers Bey, the Consul of your respectable kingdom in Damascus, in which I have asked of his Excellency a teacher from the part of your kingdom, that he may teach the children in our village reading and writing; then his Excellency was kind enough to send us a teacher called Abdel Messieh, to teach the children of our country, who are composed of Druses and Christians. The said man came and began to teach the children and remained one year and six months and good fruits and considerable advantage resulted of his teaching and we have found him an able teacher possessing good conduct. Then he went to Damascus and from Damascus to Mardun, where he married and never returned to us. As the children were in good success and advancement and on account of his absence are nearly going to forget what they, have learnt, therefore I beg you to be so kind as to let the said Abdel Messieh return to us as a teacher and I hope that his return will be a great means for the children’s success and benefit; and by this you will be doing us great kindness and the best favour and you gain great reward.

“And as you have left the comforts of your country and came here for the benefit of the people and we have been accustomed to receive your kindness and favour by

this beneficial man, by which you will gain the spiritual rewards and besides all this we are under the protection of your kingdom and very attached to you;

“Therefore we pray you to be so kind as to order, the said teacher to return, that he may accomplish the children’s education, because he had practised this undertaking and it was seen prospering in his hand; and we shall be very much obliged and very thankful to your kindness if he return, hoping that by this means the success will extend and that this school will be the means of foundation of a great many schools in this country.

“In short, all our hope is that you would order the said man to return and teach the children as he used to do. Begging you to remember us in your prayers and favour us with your letters that we may be able to know about your health.

ISMAIL IL ATRASH, 21 SHAWAL, 1285

The establishment of the school at Zachleh, with the sanction of the Governor-General of the Lebanon and the authority of the imperial Firman from Constantinople, took every one by surprise. Truly this is the Lord’s doing and it is marvellous in our eyes!

“To see men and women, as well as children, flocking to the Protestant services at our school on the Lord’s-day is the more remarkable when we bear in mind the darkness and bigotry of that priest-ridden population. Not three years ago, during our stay there, one of our pupil-teachers, after spending the day with her relations, stated that a lady had called upon her aunt and asked, had she yet purchased a standing-place for herself in heaven, as the priests had now some on sale and were disposing of them!’ We had heard of this monstrous practice before; but to feel quite sure, we made inquiries and learned that it was the general subject of conversation at the bath that morning, that many had bought two feet square and others more, but none would own how much she had paid for her lot.

“This purchased possession in heaven is the absolute property of the purchaser; none may expel her from it, nor can she go into her neighbour’s plot. Incredible as this fact may seem, it is not confined to Zachleh. In a neighbouring village a poor Maronite widow, who had with difficulty succeeded in raising sufficient money to buy the two feet square in Paradise for herself, begged the priest to allow her to have her little grand-daughter with her, promising to keep the child close at her side, so as not to overstep the boundary line!

“To such a people the entrance of God’s word is as the dayspring from on high.’

“This most lovely of the towns of Lebanon has been for ages the stronghold of the most abject priestly domination and sternly resisted every attempt to introduce the knowledge of the word of God; in their latest opposition they even stoned out of their town the faithful missionaries who ventured among them. Then came the decimating massacre in 1860, when its survivors were scattered abroad and hundreds of its women fled for refuge to Beirut, where many attended our English school and felt the power and comfort of God’s word. Missing these on their return in 1862, they sent reiterated petitions to me to open a similar school at Zachleh.

“To plant a Protestant Bible School in such a fanatical town was an undertaking of no ordinary difficulty, yet gladly would we have responded to the first petition from some of its chief inhabitants, but the Lord saw fit to appoint a long waiting time of trial and opposition.”

In July, 1868, the school was opened by Mrs. Thompson, who placed two English ladies as the teachers. Services were held on the Sundays by native missionaries, sometimes one hundred and fifty being present and the school numbered one hundred and twenty-six pupils. “But our success stirred up the hostility of the priests, who denounced both children and

parents, Sunday after Sunday, from the altar, but without effect, the parents coining to the teachers to encourage them to go on. 'Never mind; they may as well speak to our shoes!' It was then announced that the Patriarch himself would come to Zachleh, which he did in great pomp, attended by a retinue of above a hundred priests and bishops.

"All this time our party were subject to many annoyances, such as visits in the evening from priests in disguise, or other parties with doubtful motives, which rendered it desirable to remove the school to a less exposed position; and, thanks to the liberality of a native, a very desirable exchange of houses was effected, the present large and commodious premises being inclosed by a wall. In reference to this transaction, Mr. J. Macgregor observes: 'This munificent aid from a native is of itself a real proof of the value set by them on the school.'"

THE ZACHLEH BOYS' SCHOOL

"Many were the fine eager little fellows who came in as a class among our girls; but feeling the importance of a regular Protestant Boys' School, I gladly fell in with Mr. Bird's request to let our boys' class form the nucleus of a school, under the care of a young native from Abeih, who now conducts the Sunday services at our schoolhouses and thus the Sultan's sanction for the opening of a girls' school has been made available for one for the boys."

Mrs. Thompson, in one of her letters, observes: "We have lately had a visit from Mr. Macgregor, which has greatly cheered us. Writing on the 17th December, after describing his passage over Mount Lebanon, he says: -

"We stumbled down one side and up another, till our horses reached Mrs. Thompson's branch school, chiefly aided by friends in Glasgow. Fine airy rooms and a cheerful courtyard, open to the fresh-blowing mountain air; these are the features of the Zachleh school. The house, just occupied, is to be white-washed today, so the scholars have a holiday, though the women

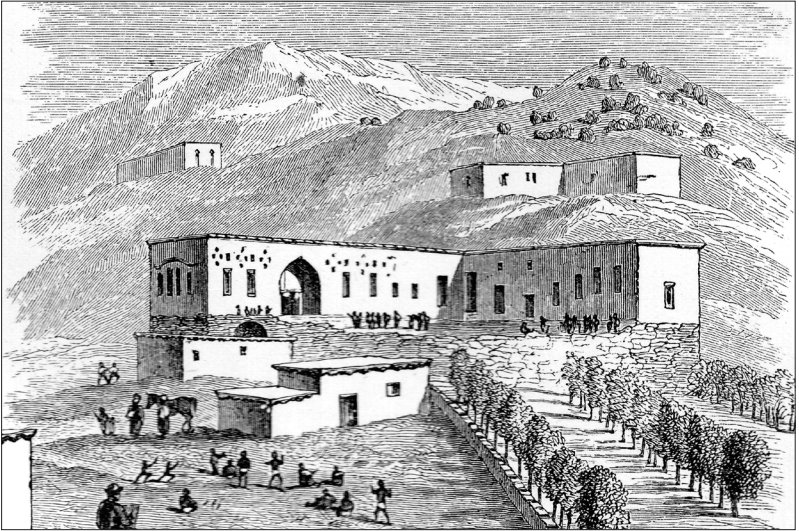
(!) who are to whiten the walls have not arrived and it is noon. However, the boys of the town followed us up to the schoolhouse; so that, when called to come in, there was soon a large and motley array, first of little girls, who sat quiet and well-behaved in a room open to the air; and then of boys; then of men of various ages, fringing the background with their graceful head-gear and their many-coloured robes.

“My address to the children was very well interpreted, each sentence at a time, by a girl; and another interpreted the prayer, to which all listened and God heard us too, we may be sure. It was a pleasing, strange and solemn sight - the congregation half indoors and half in the open air - half children, half old men - half spoken in English, half in Arabic - and to think (and to say) that never again in this world, but surely again in the next, we should all meet each other once more. Nearly all the inhabitants are Christians by profession, most of them bigoted papists, with lazy priests for guides. . . . But a deeper, truer Christianity seems lately to have spread in Zachleh and many, old and young, are eager to read the Gospel.”

Mr. Macgregor ascended the roof of a neighbouring house to take a sketch of our school. The owner, on learning that the gentleman was an English Protestant, not only sprinkled the roof with holy water, but burnt incense, to ward off the curse of defilement. The image-maker, too, - the best painter of church interiors in Syria, - whom Mr. Macgregor met here and who, as he says, has limned many a ‘Virgin’ and ‘Saint’ upon their idolatrous walls, has now learnt a purer faith and, at a great sacrifice, has given up his profitable craft and is preparing to become an evangelical missionary. He was forced to leave Zachleh, as his relations threatened to beat and even kill him.

HASBEYA - MOUNT LEBANON

“This once large and flourishing village at the foot of Mount Hermon may still



THE BRITISH SYRIAN SCHOOL AT ZACHLEH

be said to be as a widow seated upon the ground,' from its isolated situation and seeming utter inability to rise from its ashes after its terrible destruction in 1860. True, it is still the Government seat of the descendants of the mighty Saladin and of the Druse Suzerainty of the house of Jumblatt and a few high official Mohammedan families still reside here, but its inhabitants in general are very poor. Vine-dressers and olive-gatherers, like their forefathers, the people of Hasbeya have no resources when these fail. Hence many of their houses are still lying in ruins as when I visited them in 1863, while the ravages of the locust, fever and sickness have put it still farther out of their power 'to build up the old waste places.' The Protestant Boys' School and Custa's Sunday services, with the occasional visit of missionary, help to raise the Mind from earthly sorrow to the only true source of consolation.

"Our girls' school, established in 1863, has, under God, been the means of life and joy to this heart-stricken people and the residence of an English lady has taught them many a lesson of cheerful submission to the will of God. During the early part of the year and summer, Hasbeya was visited with much sickness and fever, which laid low old and young and brought many to their grave, so that their vintage and olive-gathering were seasons of sorrow. Miss Gibbons, who spent the summer months with us at Zachleh, bore traces of the grief which had encompassed her." After passing a couple of months there, she returned to her distant sphere of work in Hasbeya. We give a few extracts from her own pen:

"Notwithstanding the many hindrances during the past year to a regular attendance at school and church, there has been a steady progress in the various branches of instruction, as also in general order and cleanliness. We fervently pray our loving Father, who has surely sent each little one to be trained for Him, will bless the seed sown in their young hearts and in His own good time produce fruit to His glory; and may our school prove to be as

DIFFICULTIES

'the handful of corn on the top of the mountains.' (Psalm 72.)

"The fluctuating attendance arises from the poverty of the place and the elder children being much engaged in out-door work. In the spring and early summer they are employed in feeding the silkworms; then comes the harvest and after that the vintage; then again the olive-gathering, the latter keeping them all busy till about the middle of December. As soon as the olives are gathered in, the oil is extracted in their houses, so there is not much of a school except from the beginning of January to the end of July. Fever and ague are also very prevalent and often prove fatal. Five of our scholars died during the past year. We have under instruction Marmites, members of the Greek Church, Protestants, Druses and Moslems.

"It often gladdens our hearts to hear their young voices as they pass our window on their way to the river for water, singing hymns and repeating texts in our own tongue. Often do we add our Amen and breathe a prayer that God will give the clean heart and right spirit.

"I have paid two visits to the seraglio; the first time there were nine ladies when Hernia and I entered, but the room was soon filled with children, servants and others. A gentleman, hearing that we were there, asked permission to come and see us; his children had not been to school that day and he told them he wished them to go every day and when they did not they were to get a good beating, as he used when he was at school. I remarked that I was no advocate for beating children - that gentle, firm treatment did more good, to which all the ladies seemed to agree, as they nodded their heads and the one who was seated near me patted me on the shoulder. I asked the children to repeat some texts, which they did so nicely in Arabic and English; also two very beautiful hymns. I was astonished at their confidence before so many people. The second visit was after my return, when I found them all as busy as possible, making lemonade, because Demia, aged eight years, was

VISIT TO THE SERAGLIO

going to be betrothed that day; and even while I was there the gentlemen began to arrive, so I stayed but a few minutes. I left a small book of the Parables on the divan, in the hope that some one might take it up and read it.”

In a letter to Mr. Mentor Mott, dated February 9th, Miss Gibbons says:

“From the day you left Hasbeya, we have had such incessant rain and cold weather that I had no favourable opportunity to give the widows their supper until the 2nd of February. On that day a well-dressed and plentiful supper was served in the schoolroom, at about five o'clock, to thirty widows and a few children who came with them. I requested Abou Georgius, the native pastor, to come and speak to them, which he did very nicely. The portion of Scripture selected was the ‘parable of the great supper,’ Luke xiv. 12, after which prayer was offered.

“The women made many salaams. The remains of the supper were warmed up next day and served for the children’s mid-day meal, which they enjoyed thoroughly; they were forty-six in number; the novelty of the thing pleased them greatly. Afternoon school being out of the question, we took them for a walk on the opposite side of the valley, where they sang hymns and gathered wild flowers.”

To return from Hermon to Lebanon, - Mrs. Thompson still kept her eye and heart on Deir el Kamar, the great Druse centre and where there is also a large Marmite population; but up to the last year the school, owing to political difficulties, remained in abeyance; the Jesuits having used every influence with the Government to prevent its establishment. In the neighbouring town of Mokhtara she was meantime blessed with success.

She thus writes:

“Our school at Mokhtara has given us considerable anxiety during the past year, chiefly caused by the peculiar constitution of society in the East and more especially in the Druse villages. In addition to the interruption

of the summer holidays, when the children are employed in stripping the mulberry leaves, fattening the household sheep, gleaning grapes and gathering the olives, the French nuns from Deir el Kamar commenced operations; they waited upon the Sitt Jumblatt for her patronage, which she declined, saying that the English were her friends. In the holidays the parents sent down to request that we would re-open the school as soon as practicable and, if possible, under teachers of more mature age. We had much difficulty in accomplishing this; and on sending a confidential person to make the necessary arrangements, he found that the French Sisters had applied for our schoolhouse and offered the owner to double any sum we might now give or offer, though our contract had still a month to run. We authorised him to pay down a year's rent in advance and the owner, though tempted by the offer of the larger sum, said she did not like the Jesuits and would rather let the English have the school as before.

“It was surprising how much the zealous fanatics had achieved in a short time. The Padre had come over from Deir el Kamar to aid in enlisting children for their school and the Sisters had induced several young women to give in their names as probationary nuns. He ordered all the people who had Protestant books to bring them to the church. They did so; but what was their indignation to see him collect them in a heap and burn the Word of God! Many were very angry; but the priest told them to come to church on a given evening, when he would show them that he had good cause for what he had done. The church was darkened; the Padre told the people to look one by one through the hole of a little box, where, he said, they would see the fate of those who became Protestants, They did so and in this (which was probably a camera-obscura) they saw schoolchildren, with their hands folded and others carrying books, thrust into a yawning fiery gulph by horrid devils with swords and pitchforks! Thus we have a repetition of the lying wonders

PRIESTLY IMPOSTERS

of the dark ages, coupled with the severity and allurements peculiar to the Jesuits. Not a few of the people are indignant, while others have been drawn aside by fear or enticement."

AIN ZAHALTEH

"The girls' school in this most lovely village owes its existence to Excellency Daoud Pasha, the late enlightened Governor of the Lebanon, who was desirous to make this small hamlet the Protestant centre of the Lebanon; one-fifth of the inhabitants being Protestants, with a little church and native pastor of their own. It is a secluded village, ensconced in highly picturesque mountains, very difficult of access. This school was opened by us and commenced on the 13th of October, 1867, under Miss Lindsay, with six of our young pupil-teachers and soon almost every girl in the village was under instruction, while, on the Sabbath-day, the women were gathered together for a Bible-class. "Owing to the severity of the winter and the difficulty and expense of transport, the new schoolhouse, towards the erection of which Daoud Pasha contributed £40, was not completed till the summer. As part of the Druse Governor's house, which we had hired for the winter, was destroyed by the storms, Mr. Bird kindly had the school removed to the church, where, amidst great difficulties and privations, Miss Lindsay bravely carried on the school during one of the severest winters known in Syria for many years.

"During the summer holidays, Mr. and Mrs. Mott and I went to Ain Zahalteh, for the opening of the new schoolhouse, a commodious vaulted room capable of accommodating 100 children. The premises are very compact and contain two rooms for the teachers, a large girls' dormitory and two kitchens.

"Though Ain Zahalteh may not rise so speedily to the importance designed for it by Daoud Pasha, its Christian influence on the surrounding,

mountain districts is unmistakable and it may be said with truth that Ain Zahalteh is as a city set on a hill. The people are very poor and while the women take charge of the olive gardens and vineyards and fattening the household sheep, the men go from place to place as muleteers. Most of them contrive to be at home on the Sabbath-day and are very diligent in their attendance on the Protestant service. Many of them have begged for the gift of a small Testament, which they might tuck into their zenaar (girdle) and this carry about on their journeyings across the mountains. By the liberality of the British and Foreign Bible Society, all who seem to be real inquirers have been supplied with a copy. That they are read and valued we have learned from many quarters.

“Thus, one day, after accompanying some friends as far as the river, we rested under a shady booth near the mill-stream; two respectable men were seated on the opposite bank and we soon entered into conversation. One of them was a Roman Catholic and on my asking him had he read the Testament, he pulled out of his zenaar a very small pocket edition, telling me it was his constant companion and comfort. Taking the book into my hand, I saw written in it the name of one of our young pupil-teachers. He stated that his wife had for some time attended the women’s Sunday-class at Ain Zahalteh and that at his earnest request the teacher had lent him the book, saying she could not give it, as it was a gift from Mr. Mott. ‘I ought to return it,’ said he, ‘but I know not how to part from it.’ He is, of course, one of those who now possess Testaments of their own. The men of Ain Zahalteh have a good example before them in their Druse Governor, who not only reads the New Testament in Arabic, but is diligently studying it in English, in which he has made some little progress. His wife and other members of his family are also learning to read Arabic.

“The progress of the children has been very satisfactory, although their

VISIT TO DAMASCUS

attendance in the summer is much hindered by out-door occupations and laying up food for the winter. Before the expiration of the holidays the native pastor, as well as the Beg, came to Beirut and begged for the re-opening of the school and they; as well as several other natives, requested that we would send Alia Azar, Miss Copley's protégée, who had acquitted herself so satisfactorily both at Hasbeya and Mokhtara. The choice accordingly fell on her and another of Miss Copley's girls, Takla Behan, who are getting on admirably, notwithstanding the intense cold and the many bereavements by death from measles and croup among their little flock. They write: 'We are happy together because we are labouring in the Lord's vineyard. This makes us feel happy, that the children are willing to learn and know their Saviour.' "

The following letter is a graphic illustration of the wonderful combination of our dear sister's varied powers of mind and body; and is peculiarly valuable as being among the last of her correspondence:

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL, DAMASCUS, DECEMBER 31ST, 1868

"I came to Damascus by diligence on December 19th, respecting repairs and almost said the whole diligence - for being Ramadan, no Moslem likes to travel across the Bukaa. On Sunday we attended service at the Consulate and in the afternoon Mr. Macgregor accompanied me to the new schoolhouse, where the children were assembled for the first time. It was very pleasant to meet the dear young teachers and the children again; there is something quite unique in their appearance, so many of them being Jewesses of the higher classes.

"Next day Miss James and I went to the sale at Mr. Rogers's and found many articles suitable for our school. We hastened home, as I was anxious to begin school the same day. The dear children were as busy as could be, helping to put down mats, place forms, carry articles of furniture and

CHRISTMAS AT ZACHLEH

bedding, some sweeping, some cleaning, while carpenters and painters were scattered over all the place. We prepared a charcoal fire on a small brazier and by the afternoon began to look rather comfortable. The Hon. Mrs. Digby and Mr. Macgregor kindly joined our dinner-table and we passed a most delightful evening.

“Next day I had to see about the back door of our house, which leads to the Greek quarter, which has actually been bricked up, as the court into which it opens is Church property. As the owner is in Beirut, I had to send several telegrams and await his reply, which could not come till the 28th. I therefore decided to run over to Zachleh for Christmas Day, as Miss Wilson was feeling very lonely. The 24th was glorious. I started at three a.m. and arrived at two in the afternoon.

“I found the schoolroom almost completed, so I arranged to dedicate the house on Christmas Day. Every one put hand to work, the Governor’s son also taking much interest in the matter. In the evening I had some conversation with Isaac, the itinerant missionary and Mr. Bird’s schoolmaster, both of them able young men.

“I arranged with Miss Wilson to invite some of the native converts to dinner, so we had to make various contrivances to provide a fare. Many hands were soon at work to prepare what proved an apology for a Christmas pudding. No more meat was to be obtained, so poor Miss Wilson had to give up two of her pet chickens. Still this would not suffice; and while deliberating what was to be done, an Effendi sent his servant with a hare and a brace of partridges. Miss Wilson and I looked at each other. Here was another instance that He who openeth His hand wide and filleth all things living plenteously, was thus mindful of His children at the present moment; but now that we had our hare, no one knew how to skin it. The woman who does the cooking had never skinned a hare, nor had any one else. At last one of our

girls said she knew how and in half an hour she brought the skin in triumph, with the decapitated head safe in its skin.

“The children had assembled at an early hour and by two o’clock were all - I cannot say in their places, but crowded at the upper end of the room, while the rest was so thronged, it was almost impossible to wedge in a dozen chairs for the principal folks, among whom were several Effendis. There had been no invitations to any one; all came of their own accord. Among these was a Turkish Effendi; who had been present at our examination at Beirut. He was perfectly charmed and asked for some of the infants to come up to him and repeat their pieces.

“Isaac began by reading 1 Samuel i. All listened with great attention. Various portions of Scripture were read or repeated by the children and Christmas and other hymns sung. The noise at the door and by the women inside was truly provoking. I asked the Turkish official to order silence. He got up and said in a loud voice, ‘My friends, you must not make so much noise. This is a place of prayer and God’s word has been read. It is a school. If any want to talk, let them go outside; and when they have finished, let them come back again.’

“At the conclusion all expressed their thanks and many came to tell me how pleased they were with the progress of their children. All spoke of Miss Wilson’s kindness.

“After sunset we sat down to dinner with the schoolmaster, native preacher, the image, painter of former days and four other native converts, or rather inquirers. Our dinner went off very well, all things considered. It was amusing to see some of them handle a fork and knife and rejoiced at the permission to lay them down and to eat with their fingers. As the Greeks are fasting, some of the company withdrew from the table, on discovering that butter had been employed in the cooking. After the cloth was moved, several

CHRISTMAS AT ZACHLEH

other natives, who had been waiting a long time, came in. A large Bible was placed on the table and after a hymn and prayer the schoolmaster began and every one read a verse in turn. We parted delighted with our Christmas Day. Miss Wilson and I sat up till past two, when a knocking at the gate aroused us. A telegram from Beirut, entreating me to hasten my return on account of the examinations at our institution. What was to be done? I could not return without finishing my affairs at Damascus. I therefore resolved to start for Damascus early in the morning. Miss Wilson and the young teachers walked part of the way with me; but as we descended, the mud was so deep they could not proceed. I had to mount Grey and ride on to Storah. For many weeks past the diligence has been almost empty every Saturday; but, alas! on this occasion it was full. It was the Hadje; or the Mecca pilgrims on their way to Damascus. Horses, mules, camels and men, all starting as we arrived. I offered double fare if they would make room for me. But no; the diligence drove off and left me with my groom. As I was well mounted, I thought I had better proceed, rather than return to Zachleh and perhaps find no place for two or three days. I accordingly started; but I knew not what was before me. From noon to sunset all was well; but after that it became cold. I hoped to rest at the next station; it was impossible. Two hours and a half the same thing. We had to pass through the deep gorge of the Anti-Lebanon, the moon as bright as daylight. We met the laden waggons from Damascus to Beirut at the entrance of the valley and after that all was lonely. Now and then we heard the howlings of the jackal, or the distant barking of the dogs guarding the flocks. I must confess to considerable alarm more than once when the deep projecting rocks or solitary trees caused a shadow which I transformed in imagination to banditti. However, I felt sure that God's eye was upon me and His presence with me in the valley. When we at length reached the next station, all the world was asleep except the dogs, which set up a furious noise.

MOUNTAIN JOURNEY

There was no place where I could stay for the night; so on and on I rode, till I was so cold and stiff and had to dismount; but walk I could not for some time, my feet were so benumbed. Happily Ibrahim had some bread and cheese with him and I remembered the flask of brandy which dear Mentor had so thoughtfully provided me with before leaving home.

At last, about an hour after midnight, we reached the Dummar at the entrance of Damascus. I was thankful when we arrived at an hostelry; but again I was to be disappointed. The good wife was in bed and not to be disturbed. I then walked on, for ride I could not, I was so cold. I thought I would stop at the country house of one of our Israelitish friends, but Ibrahim encouraged me to proceed, assuring me we were near Damascus; so I walked on for two hours and after at length crossing the bridge and entering the very streets of Damascus, Ibrahim asked me, Did I know the way to the new schoolhouse? Any one who has passed through the labyrinth of bazaars in the daytime will conceive my dismay on being asked to show the way at night. 'We can ask,' he said and so we did many times, but no one knew. The dogs made a great noise. Here and there some man carrying a huge lanthorn announced that some Turkish Effendi was returning home. This being Ramadan, some of the gates were still open; but the streets were so slippery, that my horse, not being accustomed, stumbled several times, so that Ibrahim had to dismount and lead him, while his mare was always running astray, evidently on the lookout for a stable.

"It was no small difficulty to get some of the huge gates of the bazaar opened to admit us and our horses. Many of the porters being blind men, nobody would undertake to guide us. At last we came to a tailor's shop, where some four men and a boy were working by the light of a solitary lamp. Here I felt sure of a guide. But no; not one would stir. They said that to-morrow was the first day of the week and they must finish their work. I offered them a

MIDNIGHT IN DAMASCUS

dollar; no, it was impossible. What was to be done? At this juncture a Turkish Effendi came up and on finding that I was an English lady on her way from Zachleh, after a little discussion he mounted Ibrahim's mare and brought me in safety to St. Paul's School. You may conceive my thankfulness to God on finding myself safe in the large court. Miss James and Miss Lindsay were up in a moment and, without waiting for supper, I lay down on my bed and was asleep in an instant.

"I have related the adventures of December 26th at the risk of getting more blame than pity. It is an episode in Eastern life, but one I would on no account repeat. Mr. Rattray says that the distance from Zachleh to Damascus is about 75½ kilometres, or 64½ English miles. I had to remain the greater part of Sunday in bed and it was very refreshing to hear the voices of those below singing many English choice hymns; and I thought, like the prisoners at Philippi, some of the neighbours of St. Paul's School might hear the singing and, like the gaoler, be converted and saved.

"Monday morning I was all right and thankful I had come, as there was much business to settle.

"A telegram has just arrived from Beirut to authorize me to pull down the blocked-up entrance. I have sent for consular advice. When will Christians love as brethren?"

From the effects of this journey she never entirely recovered, as the following extracts will prove:

"*February 1st, 1869*, dated from my study in the new wing. We have had so much to do in a variety of ways that it is difficult to accomplish what comes before us day by day. I often feel as though we had more on hand than we can get through. It is hard work and were it not that it is the Lord's work, I do not think it would be possible to persevere. Rest, rest - 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 give me rest of mind, though it be with pain of body.”

He who has bid the weary and heavy-laden come to Him for rest, bid her come aside for a while. Scarcely had the sigh for rest been uttered, than it was heard and answered. On the 20th of February she writes:

“As you will have heard of my late illness, you will rejoice to know that, by God’s mercy, I am now once more in the sitting-room and able to continue our Annual Report, with dear Augusta’s help. My season of sickness I believe was really needful; for so incessant are the distractions and calls of duty, that the soul is in danger of starving in the midst of plenty. Thus have I found my sick bed to be a time of real refreshment from the Lord, as regarded my own soul, while it afforded me an opportunity of speaking to many of our dear gills individually on their present standing as Christians.”

On her return from Constantinople she writes on the 11th of June, 1869:

“With a heart full of gratitude to God I take up my pen to write to you once more from our clear ‘Madresse.’ Yes, I have been permitted to return home, not only in safety, but quite invigorated by the sea voyage. Indeed, the change altogether has been useful; and though I regretted to leave the institution so long, yet I can truly say I found not only all as I had left, but in some respects decidedly improved. My dear sisters have devoted themselves to the work and thus all has prospered. Mr. Waldmeir, too, had arrived during my absence and commenced visiting the out-schools daily. On Monday we had a visit from Eli and Sybil Jones; Mr. Alien, Mr. Wakefield and Captain Fire. They were delighted with the improvement of the school and were quite overcome with the *tout ensemble*, as presenting one of the most promising pictures they had seen of Syria’s future. At the request of our friends we sent word to the teachers of the different schools in Beirut, to bring the children at half-past seven the next morning to the college. The shortness of the notice and the distance prevented them from bringing all the children; but truly it

VISIT TO CONSTANTINOPLE

was a wondrous sight, as school after school entered the great hall and took the places assigned to them. The number of pupils, including some of our Moslem women with covered faces, amounted to more than 800.

“Truly it was a blessed meeting and while our hearts were filled with gratitude to God, who had wrought such a great work in our midst, it made us feel our own unworthiness and short-comings in our service for Him. It was really marvellous to see at one place Syrians, Greeks, Maronites, Druses, Turks and Jews, all standing up together and joining in singing the sweet songs of Zion! What we now need and must pray for without ceasing is the blessing of God’s converting power on the hearts of the dear children. What a noble band of maidens would then be prepared with shining lamps in their hand to meet the Bridegroom, when the thrilling cry shall be heard, ‘Behold, He cometh!’

“It is now time I should say a few words on the subject of my visit to Constantinople. Dear Miss Copley will ere this have told you of our kind reception by Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, who invited us twice to dinner and once to luncheon in the course of one week and in fact did all in their power to show us kindness. They also invited Daoud Pasha to meet us and thus enabled me to see that his sentiments were more than ever favourable: to us and our work. By the advice of Mr. Elliot and Mr. Hughes, the oriental *attaché*, arraignments were made for me to have an interview with Mustafe Lefeck Effendi, former Minister of Public Instruction and for two years Turkish Ambassador at Paris. He is one of the most wonderful - if not *the* most wonderful Turk of the age - a very learned man, a great patriot and philanthropist. He may be looked upon as the silent regenerator of Turkey. He is master of many languages, modern and oriental, a poet and lover of science. He has written many elementary works for schools, modern history, dictionaries, etc.; has translated several works from the English, German, French and Spanish.

VISIT TO CONSTANTINOPLE

His study and his library especially, reminded you of the abode of our great English literati, while his ante-room, with plain oaken panels, revealed, when unlocked, stores of books for sale or gratuitous distribution. He said he had heard about three years ago of the instruction of Turkish girls in the British Syrian schools and expressed his satisfaction at this step. He said that, as a proof of his esteem and encouragement, he begged to present me with a supply of Turkish books and also eight maps, which he had photographed from some very complete ones of a large size. It was the last copy he had. He added, 'You are more in advance of female education in Syria than we are in the capital and I shall be happy at all times to give you what help or advice I can.' He was as good as his word and sent me a large supply of Turkish books, with a set of the maps. The gentleman who brought them was a professor of the Boys' College - a Mohammedan. He said, "tell me, is it true that you have Mohammedan girls as boarders in your school? Well, it is wonderful! I could not have thought it; I hope you teach them to be useful."

1869 - 1870

DAUGHTERS OF SYRIA

CHAPTER 12

IN the providence of God, this was to be the last year in which the schools were to enjoy the advantages of the personal superintendence of their devoted foundress and that only for a part of the year. To the last hour of her earthly pilgrimage, however, she was cheered by reports of continued extension of the work and by invitations to fresh openings.

One of the most interesting events in the beginning of the year was the journey of some of her young pupils to Jerusalem, accompanied by Miss Lloyd, to be confirmed by Bishop Gobat, on the 21st of January, the twenty-eighth anniversary of the arrival of the first Anglican Bishop in the Holy City.

The advance of Christian education was most marked in this year in Damascus and also especially among the Moslem women of the higher classes throughout the towns generally. On the latter subject it is of course difficult and it would be unwise, to enter into many details.

The work among the Mohammedan ladies, as well as among the poorer

HAREEM WORK

classes, is of a more private character than that among the Christians and even the Druses. Their hareems are secluded; their inner life is secluded; they are shut out, not merely from sight and from interchange of thought with the other sex, but their very faces and persons are shrouded from ordinary gaze. None but their own sex are allowed to have intercourse with them. Hence it seems almost a breach of confidence to draw aside the veil and make them either the gazing-stock of the curious or even the object of personal observation to those who are interested in their welfare. The work in the hareems and among the Moslem females in Beirut was commenced by Mrs. Thompson as early as the year 1860, though from motives of delicacy it was kept in the background. Some of the highest ladies in the land and their children, as well as the poor, were under her wise and loving influence. Mrs. Bowen Thompson never arrogated anything to herself, but in consequence of some misconception relative to the party who had begun the work, she felt constrained for truth's sake to step out of her usual reserve and openly aver by whom that work had, been commenced; and we consider it due to her memory to give a copy of the letter, one of the last she wrote, in reply to some remarks in the Sunday at Home for June 1869:

BEIRUT, JULY 22ND, 1869

"My Dear Sir,

"I feel greatly obliged for the deep practical interest which you take in the welfare of the British Syrian Schools. I cannot but be conscious that you have bestowed more commendation upon the instrument than she deserved. I can truly say before God, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name be the glory.' I own I often feel myself in a painful position when kind friends pass eulogiums upon the work. I know that the praise of men often leads to the destruction of that which it was their simple desire to build up.

MRS. THOMPSON'S LETTER

"While some parts of the work, however, have been more prominently brought forward, there is another which discretion has induced me to keep in the background. I allude to the work among the Moslems, which had its quiet commencement in our elementary school as far back as the year 1860. Were I to trace to you the influence of training in this one school upon only one girl, your heart would rejoice. Ere long we had the daughters of wealthy Turkish officials, as well as the children of the poorer Moslems. When these dear girls reached the age of thirteen or fourteen, they were no longer allowed to be sent to our open school. I consulted the Pasha of Beirut on the subject and being a man of very enlightened views, he paid me more than one visit to see how I could carry out the plan of a secluded school, for which there had been many requests, so as to be able to receive back into the school the elder sisters, who might no longer be seen by men. Many were the invitations from parents to consult me on this subject. On one of these occasions I took with me Miss Taylor, who had for some time had a Christian school in B'Hamdoon. She was perfectly struck with the earnest pleading of some of our former pupils for some arrangement by which they could be again received into the school. She was delighted with the proficiency with which the elder girls read out of a book of Psalms which she carried about her. So great was the interest excited her mind, that in the course of a few weeks she gathered many poor children around her; and happening at the time to live in a Moslem quarter; her efforts proved very successful and her school, though as yet scarcely a year in operation, has been a blessing to many. Such was the commencement of Miss Taylor's work in Beirut in 1868.

"And now to return to our schools for Mohammedans.

"You will readily understand that the great delicacy required in any effort at reformation and instruction among the higher classes imposed silence upon me as regarded this part of the work. The high Turks do not like to have their females spoken of and though they are quite ready to send them under the care of servants, or on donkeys, or in a carriage, to the school, still they expect that I will so far respect

ON THE SECLUDED MISSION WORK

their feelings as to, educate their daughters without making any talk or exhibition of the matter. This will account to you as the reason why my sister, Mrs. Mentor Mott, did not ask Lord Clarence Paget or yourself into the Secluded Moslem School. But into that school: I had much pleasure in introducing Mrs. Cunliffe, who had brought with her, from Mrs. W. C. Alexander, a present for her protégée, the young teacher, who at that time had above fifty Moslem children under her care.

"I have mentioned these circumstances, not with a view of bringing in fresh laurels to the British Syrian Schools - from which may God ever defend us - but from the solemn conviction that yourself, as well as the English public, desire to know the simple facts of the case; and that thus, while we most heartily wish God-speed to every Christian labourer who may enter the field of education in Syria, we cannot ignore the fact that the British Syrian Mission was the honoured instrument in God's hand of originating schools for Moslem females in this interesting land.

"I remain, dear Sir, Yours."

ELIZABETH MARIA THOMPSON

Mrs. Thompson always enjoyed the fullest confidence of those Moslem, gentlemen whose families were under her tuition and it was by the special request of the late Governor that she arranged to receive their elder daughters into her house. Shortly before her departure for England, negotiations were again opened by the Government for an extensive plan for the education of the Moslem females by teachers selected by her, in a house of her own hiring and the fees paid into her hands. These negotiations were continued with those to whom she had delegated her Mission and a list of no less than 200 young people given, who were ready to attend the proposed school and to pay us for their education. All promised fair: we were to select our teachers and books; but on our requiring to have the conditions laid down in writing, the chief Sheikh submitted a circular, addressed to the Moslem population,

THE KORAN NOT TO BE TAUGHT

desiring them to send their children to our school, in which it was stated that we should allow the Koran to be a regularly admitted book of tuition as soon as the pupils were of a certain age, under two female teachers of their own people. This we could not accede to and hence the negotiations dropped. Nevertheless, some children of the highest families continue in our school both as day-pupils and boarders.

As the greater part of the work of this year pertains rather to the general history of the Mission than to the biography of Mrs. Thompson, it will not be necessary to enter on further details, but merely to notice the origin of the very latest school, which she may be said to have founded on her death-bed and which was opened on January 6th, 1870, - the Druse school at the Meedan, Damascus. The following petition from the Druses of the Meedan was the last petition for a school which was submitted to her and, at her special request on her death-bed, an answer in the affirmative was sent to the Druses.

PETITION FROM THE DRUSES OF MEEDAN

DAMASCUS, SEPTEMBER 23RD, 1869

"To the honourable lady Mrs. Bowen Thompson, send greeting!

"Dear Lady, We would inform you - we, the Druses of Bab-el-Mossallah at Damascus - that we have seen of your zeal and labour in well-doing and that is, by opening schools in our country; so that your kindness has reached to the people of Damascus, so that you opened to them a school for the girls, that they should learn to read and write and sew and to become civilized; for this is very necessary.

"Therefore we beg of your zeal to open a school for our children, that they, in like manner, may get on and be civilized. For the Lord hath sent you from. Europe to be a light among the world; therefore, for our sakes, do us the favour by opening this school for the children of the Druses. As for a master, we hope you will permit

DRUSES OF THE MEEDAN

Abd-el-Messieh, which was once with Sheikh Ismail il Atrash, that he should teach our boys and girls; for we know he teaches very well. Now we hope you will answer us kindly and that very soon and may God preserve you from all harm. We are your friends."

[HERE FOLLOW FIVE SIGNATURES

- HEADS OF THE DRUSES OF THE MEEDAN.]

We must not omit to insert the vivid description of his visit to her schools given us by Mr. Macgregor (Rob Roy), who was in Syria during the last year of her personal superintendence.

"Mrs. Thompson's schools are chiefly for girls, as most needed for the country and most fitting for a woman to manage. What a pleasant schoolroom this! Nothing can be more cheerful or inviting. Children of all ages, nations and ranks are here, busy and happy together. Those of them who are the best learners now will be teachers soon under this excellent training. See that first class of girls, with their bright-hued dresses, the natural and therefore graceful colours of their land toned down a little by the neat plain pinafores sent as presents from England. How many lovely faces there are among those maids from the mountains! Druse girls, with gay kerchiefs and black hair; Arabs and Mohammedans: some who will not show their faces and others who smile at every look from a visitor. One coming in state with nine servants, another sent to school in a carriage; the next one a mere pauper from the street and beside them both an Abyssinian with her frizzled locks. Two or three English are here, too, but all seem equally happy and equally loved.

"After a service at the school, all the girls pressed forward to shake hands with the 'Howaja Ingleez,' and one of the little creatures confided to me a very loving message I was to carry to her former teacher, now in Damascus. They were, indeed, a happy and affectionate party, more like a family than a school; and amongst

MR. MACGREGOR'S VISIT

them were the little Druse girl and the Abyssinian child, the intended bride of Theodore's son, who found so far away from home a nestling-place upon Mrs. Thompson's knee."

Speaking of the St. Paul's School, Damascus, Mr. Macgregor says:

"On Sunday the Consul had an English service in his house and there were five of us present, two of them ladies - Mrs. Thompson, of Beirut, who, indefatigable woman, had come here to open her new schoolhouse and Miss Lindsay, who was to take charge of it.

"This new house is large and roomy and very suitable for its purpose. After you have struggled up and down dingy lanes, ankle deep in mud, you enter a lively substantial pile of buildings and under these gilded roofs and carved portals the girls of Damascus stand with Bibles in their hands. How difficult to realize this when one recollects that not long ago a Christian dared scarcely ride through the streets on his journey! In the forty-four young people who had assembled there were Jewesses, Greeks, Moslems and Christians. I never saw so many pretty faces among a like number of girls. As for their dresses, they were so varied, so graceful, so suitable to womankind, that one could not but lament that our climate (for, of course, the fault is not ours) has utterly destroyed our feminine toilette.

"Mrs. Thompson was received with a gush of welcome and sweet smiles. She went round and kissed every child in turn. This was indeed a pretty sight for a rough-bearded traveller to see. I do not enlarge upon the importance of sustaining this school. One thought of Saul and Paul stamps Damascus upon a Christian's heart and fixes it as a post of duty for the brave and the generous who have gone out there to labour for Christ's sake. Nor is it only Paul of the past, but shall we not see him ourselves and speak of Damascus? Yes; and to Naaman the Abana will be mentioned. Let us have a vivid sense of the reality of heaven as a life.

“The girls sang pretty hymns and then the whole of them listened to my address, which was very well interpreted, as also a prayer.”

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM MISS COPLEY

“Among the most interesting sights which I witnessed in the East, I must place in the front rank Mrs. Bowen Thompson’s Syrian Schools. She began, as we all know, with a handful of widows and orphans as a temporary refuge in the midst of their misery and destitution. That was their origin; they have now taken deep root and are spreading on all sides, assuming proportions of immense importance to the future welfare of the country.

“They are constructed on the most liberal and comprehensive principles, but without any compromise of the main principle of all: the Holy Scriptures in the vernacular tongue being the basis of instruction. Yet there is no proselytism. The spectacle of so many different races and sects, Christians of various denominations, Druses, Jewesses and Mohammedans, sitting side by side, pursuing the same studies, singing the same hymns, engaging in the same games; the universal order, harmony and good-will among those whose parents, only a few years ago, were shedding each other’s blood and animated by the fiercest animosity, is truly wonderful! so wonderful, indeed, that it can hardly be realized except by those who have had the good fortune to witness it. The education is first-rate and is thoroughly appreciated by the parents, who crowd to the examinations and are delighted with the progress of their daughters. It is a great social reformation and woman’s mission to women has effected a greater change in the position of the Mohammedan and other Oriental females than would have been possible for the most skilful diplomacy. This work of the English lady, as she is called here, is a glorious example of the results brought about by one who took the Bible as her own guide and inspired a reverence for its truths by her life.

“These schools of Mrs. Thompson’s, as one of the Pashas observed, will give the



CHILDREN'S IN ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL, DAMASCUS

MISS COPLEY'S VISIT

Sultan a better class of subjects, as these girls will be the future wives and mothers of Syria. Whilst I was at Beirut, petitions were organizing at Antioch, at Tyre and Sidon and in the Hauran, beyond Damascus, imploring Mrs. T. to extend her kindness to them also and rescue their children from barbarism. A very important petition has lately been received from the Druses of Damascus, urgent for a mixed school. Unfortunately, it is impossible to comply with all these petitions, however one may regret being obliged to refuse them.

"The deference and affection with which the natives of all classes regard Mrs. Thompson and their implicit confidence in her, are truly remarkable. We may well be proud that it has been the privilege of an Englishwoman in the providence of God to organize this great and beneficial work and at the same time to solve a social problem of no ordinary difficulty. The obstacles in her path can only be estimated by those who are acquainted with the East. The faith, courage and self-sacrifice with which she persevered in her onward course, entitle her to a high rank among the benefactors of the human race. Fame is of no account to her; but, with her love of children, to have been more than a mother to so many - to feel, as she must, that both now and hereafter Syria's daughters will rise up and call her blessed - is her great reward!"

E. M. COPLEY

But now Mrs. Bowen Thompson's labours were soon to cease and to be exchanged for everlasting rest.

Our beloved sister was of so self-commanding and elastic temperament that attacks of illness yielded to her firm reactionary power. At Christmas, 1868, she caught a severe cold from a fatiguing night-journey on horseback from Zachleh to Damascus, a distance of nearly seventy miles; from the effects of which she never entirely recovered. In the spring she was refreshed by a visit from her constant friend, Miss Copley, who came to Syria expressly

MISS COPLEY'S DESCRIPTION

to see her schools and to found one to the memory of Lady Ellesmere.

She was prevailed upon to accompany Miss C. to Constantinople, where she revisited her husband's grave and gave directions for its restoration. But, faithful to her mission, she inspected the various schools for girls, had a long interview with the Minister for Public Instruction respecting the education of the Moslem females and conferred with the Hon. Sir Henry Elliot, our Ambassador at Constantinople, respecting the grant of land promised by Fuad Pasha in 1861 and received from Daoud Pasha the assurance of his continued interest in her schools.

She returned much refreshed and resumed the personal oversight of her extensive work; rose early, was seldom absent from the seven o'clock breakfast table, presided at family worship and took her Bible-class with the elder pupils, from eight to nine o'clock. The three days' public examination in July of the Training School and Orphanage she conducted with nearly her wonted energy; at the dismissal for the summer holidays she read the number of marks, commented on the character of each individual child; and commended them all in prayer. Such was her last meeting with her much-beloved flock in the earthly Canaan.

Her incessant labours by night and by day for the welfare of the large flock which the Lord had committed to her charge, brought on the illness that gradually bore down her strength. The summer was one of suffering and weakness; notwithstanding, she could not be prevailed upon entirely to relinquish her arduous duties and even when confined to her bed she frequently occupied herself with her extensive work. She loved to have portions of the word of God and hymns read and repeated at her bedside. On one occasion she said, 'Notwithstanding my great weakness, I have never for one instant lost my peace of mind, or the sense of the presence and nearness of Jesus.'

SICKNESS

Towards the middle of September she expressed her desire to go to England and on the 17th she left the land and the people whom she loved so well and by whom she was greatly beloved and went on board with some attached friends who volunteered to accompany her to England. When on board, her sisters again offered to go with her, but she lovingly refused. 'No, no; you are needed for the work *here*,' adding that her friends would do all for her that she might require.

On the 7th of October she reached the house of her brother-in-law and her sister, at Black heath.

Though at first greatly benefited by the voyage, she gradually grew weaker and weaker. At midnight of the 20th she awoke her sister; saying, 'My mind is clear and strong as ever, but my body is sinking; I am going home.' On the 21st the physicians pronounced her case so hopeless, that, judging by the very rapid increase of suffering, they could only apprehend a rapid decline and that indeed it was a question of days. Her heart-stricken sister asked, 'What did they mean by days?' 'A fortnight, probably, was the utmost; it might be less.' Her sister went up to her room, in prayer and deep anguish, feeling it well to communicate these tidings. Mrs. Thompson threw her arm round her neck: 'My sister, my sister, I can die; but I cannot leave you and my dear children far away.'

But she yielded calmly to the will of God. She then asked her medical attendant very composedly as to the nature of the disease and what medical remedies could still be employed. There was none that could avail! nevertheless she had a strong conviction that she should recover in answer to prayer. 'Send a telegram to Beirut,' said she, 'and tell Mentor to gather the children together and pray for me: say, Elizabeth is evidently sinking; pray without ceasing.' She also proposed to ask different friends to pray and the following circular was accordingly sent to many:

THE END APPROACHING

BLACKHEATH, OCTOBER 21ST

"My beloved sister, Mrs. Bowen Thompson, has just returned from Syria seriously ill - 'for the work of Christ is nigh into death.'

"The physicians have this day pronounced her case hopeless; but, strong in faith, she has indited the following sentence, which will, we know, stir up your loving hearts to earnest prayer on her behalf."

SUSETTE H. SMITH

"Dear Friends, - I feel and also the physicians have told me, that I am rapidly sinking. I am ready to depart, yet long to abide a little longer to go back to my beloved flock on the Lebanon.

"Prayer has often achieved wonderful things: I ask you to join with your friends in prayer, that if the Lord sees fit to grant me a longer continuance here, it may be to His glory and to meet His coming with rejoicing. Yours affectionately"

ELIZABETH MARIA THOMPSON

The intelligence of her illness spread rapidly through England, Scotland and Ireland and prayers were offered in her behalf in churches and schoolrooms, at the Mildmay Conference and at many private meetings. For a few days her friends were bouyed up by an evident amelioration of some of the symptoms. Her sister writes: "And now the source of all this blessed improvement is the volume of incense of prayer which has risen up to heaven on her behalf; and in entire submission, there has been a general conviction that this sickness would not be 'unto death, but for the glory of God.

More and more deeply and sustainingly do we realize the power and prevalence of prayer. She loves to hear hymns and texts; and in saying,

'My God, my Father, while I stray,

TRUE COMFORT

she generally repeats again, -

*Let but my fainting heart be blest
With Thy sweet Spirit for its guest,
My God, to Thee I leave the rest
Thy will be done."*

On Saturday, the 23rd, the Lord's Supper was administered to her and a few friends, by her venerable pastor, the Rev. Joseph Fenn. At the conclusion, Mrs. Thompson said in a strong voice, 'I am quite ready to go; I have long made my peace with God through Christ; but I do long to go back to my dear children in the Lebanon and I believe it will be for God's glory.'

"She was always longing for news from Syria and, on hearing of the Sultan's grant of land, entered with wonderful clearness into the whole of the transaction, which had extended over nearly nine years, telling me where to find all the documents and to despatch copies for the information of the Consul. She was particularly pleased to learn that Mr. Salim Bistani, her true and early friend in Syria, had translated into Arabic a little work of hers, 'Exercises in the Gospel Narrative,' and at once desired to send him a frontispiece illustrating Christ blessing the little ones. Message after message was sent to procure one to her mind. She, remembered exactly a book, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which she thought suitable and she felt highly gratified when that ever generous Committee responded to her request and made her free grant of nearly fifteen hundred copies of this print. At Mr. Bistani's request she indited the following Preface - her last words, partly written by herself, in a trembling hand, addressed to her dear children in Syria, dated October 30th, 1869:

HER LAST LETTER TO HER FLOCK

“My Dear Syrian Children,

“When a little girl, I always wanted to go to Syria and wrote a little book to interest other little girls about you and to lead them to Jesus. It has given me great pleasure that my friend, Mr. Selim Bistani, has translated this book into Arabic.

“I now send it, with a very few simple words, to say that the same advice which I gave you long ago I give you now. Read the Word of God; make it your study. When you open the Book, put up the prayer which you find in Psalm cxix. 18, ‘Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things out of Thy law.’ Pray to God to give you the Holy Spirit to help you remember what you read, to teach you your need of it and how to make use of it; so will you become acquainted with your own heart and the Holy Ghost will lead you to the Heavenly Friend who will bless you and will bring you to glory, such as is not seen on earth.

“I know how fond little children are of pictures, to teach them about countries and trees and birds and about people who have lived in former days; so now I send you a picture - one of the loveliest that can be conceived - the loving Jesus receiving children, when others thought they were too young and wanted to send them away. ‘Suffer the little children,’ etc. Some people worship pictures, but this is very wrong and I wish every child to learn the Second Commandment. I hope to see you again in heaven. Farewell. God bless you.

“Your affectionate friend and Syrian Mother”

ELIZABETH MARIA THOMPSON

A few extracts from letters of her sister are added, to complete the brief story of her last hours.

“When the medical men left her on the 21st of October, with the solemn assurance of the near approach of death, within less than a fortnight, probably only ten days, she laid her head upon, her pillow in calm prayerful meditation. When the first gush of tears had subsided, I knelt down: and prayed, using

REFLECTIONS

towards the close the language of the collect for Easter-Eve, 'that she might pass through the grave and gate of death to her joyful resurrection.' She gently laid her hand upon my neck, as if these words did not quite express her meaning. 'Now I will pray;' and surely she poured out her whole soul in prayer - most sublime, most touching - so humble, yet so assured - not a cloud to dim her full clear view of the blood-bought mercy-seat; but I was too much overcome to recollect any but the closing words, which she uttered in a strong emphatic voice, 'And now, Lord, let none of those who love me and none of those who know, me, even think of me as going through the grave and gate of death but through the gate, of Glory. Amen.'

"Never, indeed, had I so fully realized what it is not to taste of death to have passed from death unto life - the power of His resurrection. She often said, 'I am not going to die, I am going home!' and yet there was not the slightest enthusiasm, as it is called - all uttered calmly, as deep-drawn expressions of vital truths.

"She possessed to the last such rallying powers and the life hid in Christ gave her such command over herself, even after violent attacks of spasms, that she would at once desire to be doing something and dictating short letters and messages to absent friends; for friendship was life to her.

"Although our beloved sister had dismissed all earth's cares, there was one thought - 'the memory of the heart,' - which lingered around her dying pillow. It was the promise made to her husband on his death-bed, in the hospital at Kulalee, that she would devote every energy to carry out his design of the *Euphrates Valley Railway*. It had been the one subject of the first year of their married life, when, in 1851, he submitted his plans to Prince Albert and was invited to exhibit them in the Great International Exhibition. Rising above her own crushing sorrows in the first days of her widowhood, Mrs. Thompson at once applied herself to the business and in the letter which she

OF HER LAST DAYS

addressed to the Queen from Kulalee, she says, "To this great plan I shall now devote my time and energies."

It is remarkable that now, when the mind which planned and the devoted hand which sought to carry it out, are both removed from the busy things of earth, the project of the Euphrates Valley Railway has been revived.

"From the 10th of November she evidently declined; yet, after a season of much weakness, recovered sufficiently to dictate a letter to a friend without the change of a single word - telling him she was going home, the comfort she had in the Bible and urging him to read it daily with prayer.

"She was particularly anxious not to leave any debts and her last signature was affixed to these cheques; otherwise her mind was altogether free from thoughts of earth or earthly cares; indeed, she seemed to have nothing to do but to wait for the Bridegroom's voice.

"Once, at midnight when extremely restless, I sat up and repeated 'The Home of the Soul,' a favourite hymn sung in her schools. I asked her whose hymn it was. 'Augusta's:' but then, overcome with emotion, she burst into tears, My sister's! oh, never say that hymn again!' It was evidently too much for her loving spirit.

"A friend connected with her schools, being about to return to Syria, suggested that the children should go into mourning in the event of her death. She replied, 'No; I do not wish any fuss to be made about me. I always wished that I might not die in Syria, because I knew there would be some grand funeral. I wanted to die here quietly and in your arms, my darling sister; but give my love to my Syrian children.' She afterwards consented, on my proposal, that they should wear black sashes.

"She gave minute directions respecting the disposition of her property, even naming the kind of mourning to be sent out for her sisters.

"A friend begging for a parting text; she replied, in a voice scarcely

RECOLLECTIONS OF HER LAST DAYS

audible, 'Rest in the Lord.' One day, after a long quiet sleep, she woke up and seeing her favourite niece, Frances, watching beside her, she passed her hand affectionately over her face, saying, 'The angels are very near me,' and then quietly fell asleep again.

"Indeed, these ministering spirits would seem often to have borne some message of love, sleeping or waking. She had sweet glimpses of the 'great white throne; 'the rainbow round about the throne;' 'Jesus:' such were the utterances we could catch.

"A few days before her death she again desired to commemorate the Saviour's dying love, for the strengthening and refreshing of her soul and our kind chaplain, the Hon. J. Harbord, at once responded to her request. She had long since been unable to taste any food but liquids. She lay with her eyes closed during the service and when the cup was passed she deliberately dipped her finger in the wine and put it to her lips, folding her arms across her bosom in prayer - 'Let us pray.'

She was cheered by the presence of her much-valued friend, Miss Copley and would often say, 'Send a telegram for Copley.' On hearing that a friend had called to inquire, she begged she might be admitted, saying, 'I cannot speak, but I want to kiss her.' She frequently spoke of the valued treasurer of her schools and had several conversations with him, telling him she had committed the care of her schools to her sisters and brother-in-law, who felt the deepest interest in them and she knew that her beloved Committee would hold up their hands in prayer; and sustain them in their work; often too did she send for my dear husband to pray by her and repeat hymns; a special favourite was - 'There is a safe and secret place.'

"She became gradually less able to converse - the fatal apthia in the throat rendering this painful - but still we had much precious communion of prayer in those silent watches, when she lay in my arms, with her loving head

resting upon my breast.

“On Sunday, the 14th, the time of her departure was evidently drawing nigh. Several times her feet seemed to touch the very brink of Jordan. Her large bright eye intently fixed, her hands stretched out and looking upwards, she said faintly, ‘Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Jesus, Jesus! Rest, rest! Arise! Amen.’ Even when seemingly unconscious, her manifestations of love were most touching. She frequently made an effort to throw her arm round my neck and to her latest breath grasped my hand in fond embrace; and as the last midnight hour of the Sabbath was tolling out its solemn sound, she deliberately crossed her arms upon her breast and resigned her spirit into the hands of Him who gave it and while in the very act of commending her soul to Him she entered into that rest which remained for the people of God.”

On November 18th the sad telegram reached Beirut, “At midnight on Sunday, November 14th, Elizabeth Maria Thompson entered her heavenly rest.” The grief and desolation which filled many a heart was the more poignant, that a few days before hopes had been raised by the receipt of a telegram that the prayers of her many friends seemed to have been heard and that she had rallied.

The Rev. Dr. Jessup, of the American Mission, for whom Mrs. Thompson entertained great regard, preached the funeral sermon, both at the Arabic and English service. At the Arabic service the church was densely crowded; more than double the ordinary congregation being present, nearly all in mourning. About 400 of the girls of our various Beirut schools attended and also the large boys’ school. They went in mournful procession, preceded by the Moslem Kawasses from the British consulate, who stood near the pulpit with their craped maces. A high Moslem official called upon her sisters; to express his wish that his daughter should be dressed in mourning at his own

PEACE

expense and attend the funeral sermon as a personal mark of his esteem.

Many of the chief Moslem gentlemen paid visits of condolence and their ladies, attired in deep mourning, came to mingle their tears with her sorrowing sisters.

We insert one of the many mournful wails - truly Eastern - which have poured from many a Syrian heart.

"Alas! Alas! Alas! The Star of Syria, the Queen of Lebanon, the mother of the orphans, the example of all women, the beautiful rose of Europe, whose sweet smell went forth through all the East, she who had pity on the widows and fatherless, who had given herself entirely to God's work, who has left her country and friends to travel for doing good. Alas! what shall I say of her? She has left us, she has parted with us, she has travelled to a land of rest, to a home of glory.

"Yet, is it true? Can we believe? Yea, we have not the heart to believe that we cannot see her again. We have her picture in our hearts; we think of her day and night; we cannot forget her. Truly she had the meekest heart I ever saw in my life. Although she had the wisdom of Solomon, so that she ruled all her schools in wisdom and understanding, yet she had the meekest mind, as doves and as the heart of Moses.

"Shall we not see her again? Shall we not meet with her? Ah! I feel as if my heart would break. I am quite knocked down to the ground when I think of her. No pen and ink, no language, no person, can imagine or describe what this righteous person has done. We say righteous, because we are sure she has always worn the righteousness of Christ. We can very boldly say that she could be called a martyr, for she has really laboured hard.

She worked day and night. She had her candle lighted till past midnight: she went about from one house to another to do good, to visit people, to pray with sick people.

"Poor Syria has lost her mother; the mark of grief is shown on her sorrow and

MOURNING IN BEIRUT

sadness has covered all our hearts. Oh how delighted should we be to meet her in heaven! This is the only thing that gives us comfort."

The following lines are by the Rev. Gerard Smith:

IN MEMORIAM. ELIZABETH MARIA THOMPSON

*Mourn for the widow's and the orphan's friend!
Mourn that a life so dear so soon should end!
With wisdom, grace and love divinely blest;
She raised the fallen, shielded the oppressed.
The blind she led to touch the Word and see;
And healed the strife of creeds by charity.
Damascus mourns her - Hermon's daughters weep -
Their "mother in the Lord" has fall'n asleep.
Her native land hath claimed her mortal part,
Jesus her soul, but Syria hath her heart.*

MOURNING IN BEIRUT