

# Experiences of a Mohammedan Convert

The founding of the Love and Peace mission in Omaha recently by J. I. Taminosian, a native of Syria and a converted Mohammedan, is so out of the ordinary in religious work that we print a picture of the founder of this mission and also pictures showing some of the religious customs of the Mohammedans. The followers of Mohammed, according to recent estimates, number about 180,000,000 human beings. "There is no God but God" is the principal tenet in Mohammedan dogmatics and He has created the world and the immortal soul of man, whose life on earth He shall judge and reward or punish in a future state. But the further development of this idea, especially of the relation between God and mankind, is narrow, fantastic and arbitrary. Before the almighty power of Allah the free will of man vanishes. Mohammedanism is fatalism. Immediately after the passage quoted above follows: "And Mohammed is His apostle." Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Christ are acknowledged as prophets sent by God, but Mohammed is the fulfillment of all prophecy and the Koran the final revelation. The five principal commandments in the moral code of Islam, symbolized in Mohammedan art by the hand with its five fingers, are prayer, almsgiving, fasting, pilgrimage and war against the infidel. The influence which these five commandments exercised in the time when they actually bore sway over the Moslem mind is very apparent in history. But at present only the first of them, the different modes of which are shown in the accompanying pictures, has maintained its authority intact. That of the last is entirely lost and that of the three others is disputed, or at least subject to commentaries of a doubtful character.

Travelers in Mohammedan countries speak with unqualified praise of the earnestness, sincerity and devotion with which the Moslem performs his prayers several times a day after careful ablution, kneeling on his prayer carpet, as shown in form 5, if he cannot go to the mosque, and with his face turned toward Mecca.

### Forsores Armenian Faith.

J. I. Taminosian is an Armenian by birth, having been born in the village of Bathyas, about eighteen miles southwest of Antioch, Syria, August 26, 1869. He was reared in his native city, where the disciples were first called Christians. His parents were Armenians. His father was a deacon in the Congregational church and the early training of the son was about the same as American boys receive. Like many boys in Christian lands, he forsook the faith of his parents when he became a young man. This was brought about in the following manner as told by Mr. Taminosian:

"When I was a young boy attending school we had a neighbor who was a Mohammedan sheik. One day when absent from school I saw children, as well as grown people, gathering in his house. From the window in our house I had seen the ceremonies they performed. It was a wonderful show. Some were eating fire, others playing with snakes and still others sticking needles through their bodies and eating glass. These torturous performances seemed to have no effect on them. I was amused and desired to learn their peculiar tricks. At my earliest convenience I visited the sheik and expressed my desire to learn 'that trade.' He replied: 'My son, we do those things by the strength of our religion. Those are miracles. Only holy people are entitled to exercise them.' Then there came to my mind the words of Christ: 'Behold I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions and over all power of the enemy and nothing shall by any means hurt you.' I was convinced that the true gospel was exercised among the Mohammedans and started to receive instructions about the religion of Mohammed.

"It was not long before my family knew I was secretly visiting the house of the sheik. In order to accomplish my purpose and release myself from persecution I left my home and relatives and under an assumed name went to Egypt. After many trials and difficulties I gained the sympathy of Prince Ibrahim Pasha, cousin to the khedive, Tewfik Pasha. While in his palace I announced my faith in Mohammedanism. He appointed an especial teacher to give me instructions in the mysteries of Mohammed's religion. Three years later I was ordained a priest, but continued my education for another year, when I was sent to Constantinople with a recommendation to the grand vizier, Kamel Pasha, who was second to the sultan in power. I was presented to the sultan, Abdul Hamid, who desired to hear the story of my conversion to Mohammedanism. I was his guest for three days in the Yildiz Kiosk, the private palace. He honored me by giving me 500 piastres pension salary and appointing me to preach at St. Sophia mosque, with 350 piastres monthly wages. He also conferred the honor of sheik (bishop) upon me, and I began performing ceremonies in that great and famous mosque.

"During my summer vacation, when I was in the city of Adana visiting the grand vizier's brother, who was governor of that state, an Armenian bishop sent me a message desiring to have a conversation with me. I accepted the invitation and visited him at the appointed time. With tears in his eyes he said: 'My boy, why did you not try to be a bishop in the religion of Christ among your own nation? Do you

really believe that Mohammedanism is better than Christianity?' I declared the truth that I had been honored with titles, but there is no satisfaction in my soul. I said I realized I did wrong, but there is no possibility to release myself from that bondage, because everybody is allowed to join Mohammedanism, but no one can leave it without penalty of death, according to the teaching of their religion. The dear old reverend gentleman said: 'If you go back to Constantinople I will write to the patriarch, who can appoint some people who can assist you to escape to Etchmeadin, in Russia, where you can cultivate yourself in Christianity.' I accepted the suggestion and in order to accomplish my purpose when I returned to the mansion of the governor I said to him: 'I like to go back to Constantinople for the purpose of joining the army, where I can gain more glory for my soul.' It was hard for him to go against

shed the blood of his own nation.' He gazed up to the sky, appealing to God Almighty in this manner: 'Oh, God, open his eyes, touch his stony heart, make him realize what he is doing. It is a curse for me to have my blood shed by his hands.' He was continuing his prayer when I lost myself, falling to the earth with the smite of conscience. I knew my life would be in danger if I refused my duty, but the love of nation and justice to humanity made me willing to sacrifice my life rather than to commit such a crime. When I received the command from the lieutenant to attend to my duty I refused. He reported the fact to the general and sent me to jail immediately. The matter provoked the general and my having Armenian blood in my veins was against me. A report with strong prejudices was prepared by the general and sent by special carrier to the sultan. The sultan had full confidence in the general and he therefore passed sentence by saying: 'Let him be banished to south Arabia after fulfilling his term as a soldier in the city of Yamen; in place of his receiving his discharge let him receive death. After twenty-one days in jail with

# Georgia Woman With Half Dozen Trades

There is one Georgia girl who does not propose to rust out, and she is not afraid, apparently, of wearing out. Already she is engaged in six occupations, and it is said she is seeking to add still further to her activities. She is Miss Lulu M. Pierce of Thomson. She is now postmistress of her town, church organist, editor of the county newspaper, correspondent of several city dailies, fire insurance agent and a solicitor for health insurance. One would think she could find enough to do in these half dozen occupations to keep her busy, but she is not yet satisfied and is seeking for more employment. She was not obliged from necessity to go out into the business world, but did so because of a pointed inclination to do a man's work. She says she has a man's ambitions, thoughts and ideas and feels like exercising them.

Miss Pierce was but 18 years old when she made her start in business. It was when

populism, democracy, socialism, republicanism and all other isms dealing with political questions—that she determined to have nothing further to do with them. When she had recovered from nervous prostration she accepted a position in the Thornbury college at Atlanta as instructor in Latin and mathematics, being an expert in both of these branches. Then she returned to Thomson and one by one acquired the various professions mentioned at the beginning of this story.

Miss Pierce's nerve was recently illustrated by an experience she had with a Thomson negro, who on several occasions robbed the postoffice at Thomson. The negro belonged to a notorious criminal family and she was threatened with violence if she prosecuted the thief. This only made her all the more determined, and, going to Augusta, she had him prosecuted.

In newspaper work Miss Pierce is editor of the McDuffie County Journal and correspondent for the Atlanta Journal and Augusta Herald. She has the "news instinct," and has run down many a story that has escaped the vision of the other correspondents in the town.

"I do not think that there are more obstacles in the way of women than of men in the business world," says Miss Pierce, "and I see no reason why women who do not care to be lotus eaters should not go into business or professional life. I work for the sheer love of it—it is play for me."

### Roman Cookery

The honor of having produced the first cook book in the world belongs to the Romans. Its authorship has been attributed to Caius Apicius, a gastronome who lived 114 years before the Christian era under the Emperor Trajan. Here are two recipes taken from its pages: "First, for a sauce to be eaten with boiled fowl, put the following ingredients into a mortar: Aniseed, dried mint and lazer root, cover them with vinegar, add dates and pour in liquamen (a distilled liquor made from large fish which were salted and allowed to turn putrid in the sun), oil and a small quantity of mustard seeds. Reduce all to a proper thickness with sweet wine warmed and then pour this same over your chicken, which should previously be boiled in aniseed water." The second recipe shows the same queer mixture of ingredients: "Take a wheelbarrow of rose leaves and pound in a mortar, add to it brains of two pigs and two thrushes boiled and mixed with the chopped-up yolk of egg, oil, vinegar, pepper and wine. Mix and pour these together and stew them steadily and slowly till the perfume is developed."

The Romans were very fond of surprise dishes, such as pigs stuffed with live thrushes, and, to anticipate a little, this taste descended so near our own times as the reign of Charles II, as witness a recipe of that date for making two pies which were to be served together—one containing live birds and the other live frogs. When the latter was opened "out skip the frogs, which make the ladies to shriek and skip," while the birds when released were to add to the general confusion by flying at the candles and putting out the lights. A dish of peacock was a favorite "plat" at Rome and was served at the beginning of dinner. The bird, having first been done to death by stuffing, was then skinned, the inside was filled with the flesh of other birds and the whole sewed together again and finally sent in to table affixed to a small branch, as if alive.

### Professional Eaters

O. A. Wright of Madison, Wis., supervisor of Indian schools, tells an interesting story concerning the professional eaters of the Sioux Indians on the Devil's Lake reservation in North Dakota. The professional eater among the Devil's Lake Indians, according to Supervisor Wright, pursues a recognized profession which entitles him to distinction and eminence, measured largely by his capacity. The more capacity the more eminence and distinction.

The Sioux at Devil's lake are a hospitable people. A guest must be fed, and the table placed before him must be bountifully supplied. If not, it is a gross violation of Indian etiquette, which subjects offenders to harsh criticism. The obligation on the part of the guest is equally binding. Very often the latter is the unfortunate victim of too much kindness. If, however, he should fall to dispose of all the food placed before him his offense would be as great as that of the host whose larder failed to respond to the demands of the prevailing social usage among these Indians.

The capacity of some of these professional eaters is phenomenal. They are said to be carefully trained to their calling, and the returns for their services are certainly very remunerative to the Indian mind. One who is about to make a call and who feels that he will not be equal to the occasion secures a professional eater. The latter secures for his services the food he devours and \$1 in addition. Supervisor Wright met one of these professional gentlemen at Devil's Lake who had recently performed the remarkable feat of eating seventeen pounds of fresh beef. Some doubt is expressed here as to the possibility of a man eating so much meat at one sitting. Mr. Wright told the officials, however, that the story is vouched for by Agent Getchell and Father Jerome, the latter Catholic missionary at Devil's Lake. The supervisor added that the Indian was extremely modest amid the shower of congratulations bestowed upon him by friends and admirers.



the teachings of his religion, therefore he said: 'I don't like to be a stumbling block in your way; do as the Lord directs you.'

### Joins the Army.

"On the 12th day of June I sailed from Merclia, landing at Constantinople on the 19th day of the same month. Only four days before my arrival, on the 15th day of June, 1890, the Armenian trouble took place. The patriarch had run away from his office. The representative of that office, after hearing my story, was suspicious, thinking me a detective. Therefore he objected to taking any part in the matter. When I was disappointed I joined the army. I am sorry to say my duty called me to take part in shedding the blood of my own nation. Two bands of soldiers and one lieutenant were appointed to receive forty-nine Armenians from the city jail and destroy their lives. I was one of the soldiers. Before we reached the place of destruction one of them recognized me. With a tender voice, in the Armenian language, he said: 'My brethren, I feel that we are going to be killed, but I know a man among those soldiers who denied Christ and now is ready

no privilege of reading or writing or talking, living on dry bread and water, sleeping on the damp ground, with only my soldier overcoat as covering, the sentence was read to me.

### Rescued by Young Turks.

"While I was on my way to the steamship I saw a few people standing at a corner near the seashore. I signaled the sign of danger of life according to the instructions of the Young Turks' society to which I belonged. I received no response. My grief and sorrow were increased. When we reached the steamship the captain gave the command and started his journey. "After two days we landed in the gulf of Smyrna. At night there came a great crowd and took me from the hands of the soldiers by force. They had been instructed of the facts by the Young Turks' society, the result of the signal which I gave while on my way to the steamship. I was kept secretly about ten months, but when the gossips exposed the place of my hiding to the government I was obliged to escape, and immediately went to the American missionaries' home. By them I was sent to America, reaching this country June 5, 1893."

Thomas E. Watson, former nominee for vice president on the populist ticket, and a resident of Thomson, was editing a paper in Atlanta called the People's Party, which had a circulation of 17,000. Mr. Watson suddenly had need of a business man, and knowing Miss Pierce from childhood and having confidence that she could fill the position he wired an offer to Miss Pierce, asking her to go to Atlanta. She had similar confidence and took the first train for Atlanta. Although new to the newspaper business Miss Pierce entered into her new duties heart and soul and made an astonishing success. The paper was \$600 in debt when she took hold of it. She soon had it out of debt and a comfortable sum in the treasury. As Editor Watson was often out of town and there was a paucity of editorial matter, Miss Pierce was often obliged to write the editorials. She wrote good ones, and her work attracted the attention of Atlanta daily newspaper men, and she was offered several positions on the dailies there. She had about decided to make journalism her life work, when she temporarily succumbed to an attack of nervous prostration. When she recovered she had such a distaste for politics—