

How Our Late Sister Fatima E. Cates Became a Muslim.

Her Own Account of Her Conversion to the Faith.

Just at the present moment, when the British Muslims are still feeling the loss of the lady who was the first of her sex in England to accept the Islamic Faith, the following article, penned by herself now over nine years ago, and published in the *Allahabad Review* for the month of October, 1891, will undoubtedly be read with the greatest of interest:—

HOW I BECAME A MUHAMMEDAN.

When I was a girl about 19 years of age I used frequently to attend temperance meetings, and it was at one of these meetings I heard Mr. Quilliam, who is well known in Liverpool as a great advocate of total abstinence, deliver a lecture on "Fanatics and Fanaticism," in which he gave a very graphic account of the early struggles of our holy prophet Muhammed. Up to this time I had always heard Muhammed described as an imposter and a blood-thirsty man, who forced people to believe in his religion by threatening to put them to death if they did not do so. I was, of course, much astonished at hearing Mr. Quilliam giving a different account of him.

I waited until the end of the meeting, and I then asked Mr. Quilliam to tell me something more of this religion, as I was very much in doubt as to the true faith. He spoke to me for some time; in fact he gave me a short sketch of the main principles of Islam and offered to lend me his Koran, in order that I could read it for myself, saying, "Don't believe what I say, or what any one else says; study the matter out for yourself."

I thanked him, and a few days afterwards Mr. Quilliam gave me the Koran. I accordingly took it home and commenced carefully reading it. My mother, who is a most bigoted Christian, on perceiving this asked me what I was reading. I answered, "The Muhammedan Bible." She replied, angrily, "How dare you

read such a vile and wicked book? Give it to me this moment and let me burn it. I will not allow such trash to be in my house." I answered, "No, I will not. How can I know whether it is a wicked book or not until I have read it?" She tried to take the book from me, but I escaped to my bedroom and locked myself in, and went on reading what I now consider the most precious book that could be bought.

I was continually scolded and threatened with all kinds of punishment if I continued to read such a book, but all to no purpose; for I persisted in reading it, and finally I had to carry the Koran about with me, or during my absence it would have been destroyed.

I then told Mr. Quilliam I would attend his meetings if I might. He replied, "I could do so if I wished," and of course I did. At that time the only Mussulmans in Liverpool were Mr. Quilliam and Mr. Hamilton. We used to meet, we three, week after week, and read the Koran and discuss matters. It was with great difficulty I managed to attend these meetings, being constantly watched, or occasionally, by way of a change, shut up in a room to prevent my going, as they did not wish me to become a Muslim, I having been strictly brought up to the orthodox Christian faith; and it was because I declared my views contrary to theirs on Christianity that they thought I was being led away to some other faith, probably Roman Catholicism, which they held in abhorrence; but on finding it to be the Islamic Faith words could not express their surprise and indignation. To their ideas it was even worse, for they told me I was entirely lost, and that there was no possible hope of salvation for my soul unless I returned to my former belief. I then declared myself a Muslim, and it was then that all kinds of devices were resorted to, to prevent my attending the meetings. If I wrote, my letters were intercepted, and no one can conceive the satire and ridicule I had to endure from them from then up to the present time, which is now about five years.

When Mr. Quilliam first began lecturing on

Muhammedanism we used to meet in a little room, the entrance to which was up a flight of stairs in a side street, and the neighbours used to come and jeer at us, and sometimes they amused themselves by throwing stones and other filthy garbage at us as we entered or left the room in which we held our meetings.

It was very hard work at first, but we went on steadily. Then another convert was made, Mr. Wardle, then Mr. Grundy, and gradually others; but for about twelve months I was the only lady who attended. Now we have a nice little Mosque, fairly comfortably furnished, but the mob still annoy us by throwing mud and stones; however, we persevere, and are still making fresh converts.

About three years ago I was married to a gentleman I was affianced to prior to my becoming a Muslim. My husband was then a Christian, just as prejudiced and bigoted as my mother, and their views being the same, both tried to keep me from the Mosque, but in vain. He seeing I was still determined to follow it up, and thinking there must be some truth in it, commenced likewise to read the Koran, then to attend the lectures, and finally, I am happy to say, he has become one of the votaries of our Faith.

A little over nine months ago a younger sister of mine came to reside with me. She, like myself, had been brought up, indoctrinated with all the tenets of the orthodox Church of England Christian faith. After she had been with me some few weeks she expressed a desire to attend one of the public lectures that we hold in the Lecture Hall of our Muslim Institute. The lecturer was Mr. Quilliam, and he took for his subject "Fables of Ancient Times," and pointed out to the audience how all religions, except Islam, had become corrupted by the addition of silly myths and traditions, and showed how much simpler and purer the Faith of Islam was than that of other creeds.

When we got home my sister remarked how easy it was to understand and follow such a lecture, and how different it was to the dry

and uninteresting theological discourses she had heard in Christian churches, and stated she would like to hear more about Islam. The result was that in the course of about three months she also became a Muslim.

I could give other instances of how conversions have been made, but will content myself with simply relating those I have given above, as they refer to my own family; but probably in another article I will express my views as to how the work of proselytising could be most successfully carried on amongst females and children in England.

FATIMA E. CATES.

Liverpool Muslim Institute,
September 11, 1891.

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The Secret of the Saints.

To play through life a perfect part,
Unnoticed and unknown,
To seek no rest in any heart,
Save only God's alone;
To yield with such a happy art,
That no one thinks you care:
And say to your poor bleeding heart
"How little can you bear."

Upon the brow to bear no trace
Of more than common care,
To write no secret in the face
For men to read it there.
The daily cross to clasp and bless
With much familiar zeal
That hides from all, but not the less
The daily weight you feel.

In toils that praise will never pay,
To see your life go past,
To meet in every coming day
Twin sister of the last;
To hear of high heroic things,
And yield them reverence due,
But feel life's daily offerings
Are far more fit for you.

Oh, 'tis a pathway hard to choose,
A struggle hard to share,
For human pride would still refuse
The nameless trials to bear;
But since we know the gate is low
That leads to heavenly bliss,
What higher grace can God bestow
Than such a life as this?