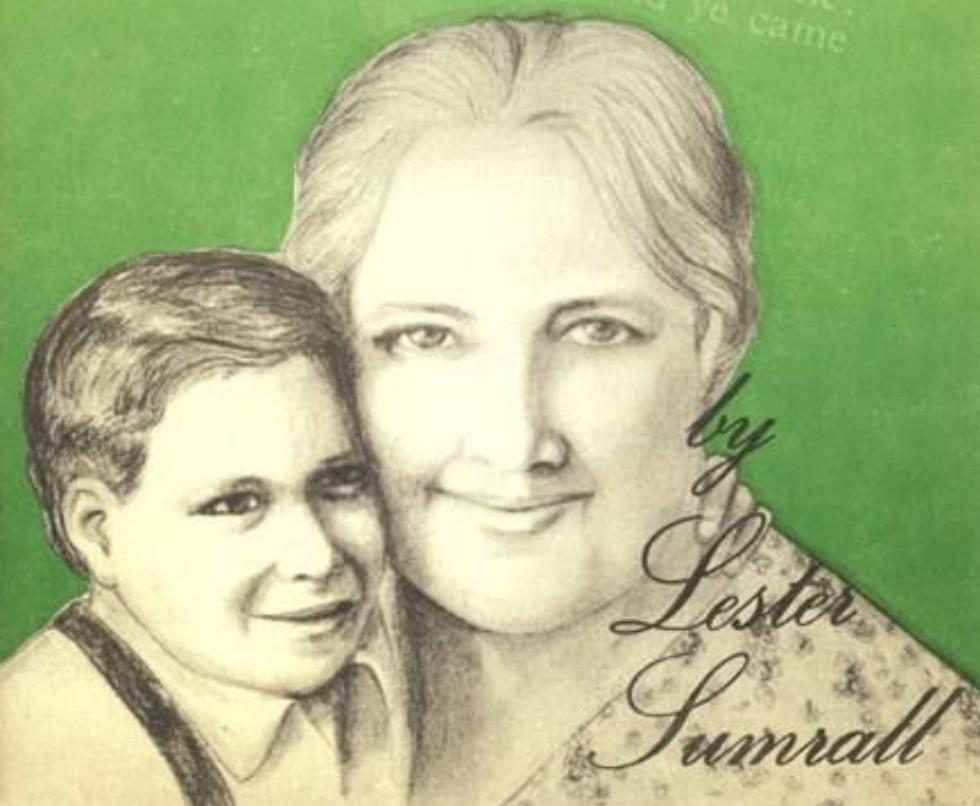


Lillian Trasher

Nile Mother

For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: I was naked, and ye clothed me: I was in prison, and ye visited me: and ye came unto me.



by
Lester
Sumrall

*“The Nile
Mother”*

by Lester Sumrall

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A TENDER VINE

Lillian Trasher wrote: "I am appalled to realize that in what is called Christian America I grew up not knowing anything about the greatest book ever written. I discovered the Bible in Atlanta, Georgia, while visiting in the home of a friend. I saw a book on a table and its cover read, 'Holy Bible.' 'Oh! this is a Bible!' I exclaimed. 'I have heard of this book.' I picked it up and read for the first time from the world's masterpiece of literature!"

Lillian told her mother she had seen a Bible and very much desired to have one of her own to read. Mrs. Trasher promised her daughter one for her birthday, which was only a few weeks distant, but Lillian, with the forcefulness which she constantly demonstrated in later life, and with the same indomitable spirit that later caused her to found the largest church institution in the Near East, replied, "Mother, I wish it now, and I shall not expect anything else on my birthday." Her mother purchased a Bible, and Lillian writes, "Oh, the wonder of reading for the first time the precious Word of God!"

A NEIGHBORLY LIGHT

Lillian was drawn nearer to her great life's work when a Christian neighbor in Brunswick, Ga., came to visit her family. It was a Christmas day, and as the two families chatted about many things of mutual interest, the neighbor, knowing the Trashers were of the Catholic faith, still let his Christian light shine. Quietly he related the story of

his life. Lillian got a little stool and drew it up close to his side, not missing a word that he said. Before departing he remarked, "We have a little prayer meeting at our house every Wednesday evening and would be happy to have you come when convenient."

But Lillian did not wait for the prayer meeting; the very next day she found an opportunity to visit the Judson Bunkleys and asked Mrs. Bunkley to tell her some more of the good news she had heard the night before. The lady explained that it was wash day and she was very busy. But irrepressible Lillian replied, "If you will tell me more about religion I will help you with the wash!" For a few hours that day Lillian listened to the Word of God expounded from the lips of a faithful housewife, as they washed the clothes and hung them out to dry.

CLAY IN THE POTTER'S HAND

God had definitely gotten hold of Lillian's heart. She went alone into a wooded section near the home and, kneeling beside a log, prayed. One day while alone with God among the bushes, with the birds singing joyfully about her, she felt the mighty power of God surge through her being. She felt joy like the birds and peace like the whispering pine trees about her. This hour was the beginning of a new Lillian. This spiritual crisis was as the hour when she was born again.

THE PERMIT

Lillian designated her "call" to the mission field a "permit." Many times she knelt in prayer and pleaded with God to permit her to be a missionary. She approached God's recruiting office as a volunteer into the foreign legion of Christ's Kingdom.

FIVE DOLLARS PLUS GOD

The tremendous faith of Miss Trasher is seen when she

moved toward Egypt with only five dollars in her possession. It is a classic in faith how her needs were supplied. She put it in her diary this way: "One evening I went to hear a missionary from India speak. During her address I felt that NOW I must go as a missionary to Africa. I had but five dollars in my possession, but not daring to disobey the call of God, I determined to go. After packing my trunk I told my friends I was ready to start. Just then I heard of a Missionary Conference being held in Pittsburgh, Pa., and I decided to go there and learn what I could from the different missionaries. In this way I hoped to discover to what part of Africa God was calling me."

Some money was handed to her, but not enough to pay her way to Pittsburgh. As everyone was waiting to bid her good-bye—for she was starting for Africa—she did not want to disappoint them by not going. Accordingly, she decided to go as far as her money would take her. Upon inquiry she found that she had enough to get to Washington, D.C. Miss Perry said she had a friend there to whom she would give her a note of introduction, and with whom she might remain until she had the rest of her fare to Pittsburgh.

Her diary continues: "In due time I reached Washington, found Miss Perry's friend, and handed her the note of introduction, 'Oh, I am so sorry,' she said, 'but I cannot take you in as I am entertaining a missionary family from Assiut, Egypt; but come in and have some lunch.' The missionary was Reverend Brelsford, to whom I was introduced as a missionary to Africa. "To what part of Africa are you going?" asked Mr. Brelsford.

"'Why — I — don't know.'

"'Oh, I see! What board did you say you were going out under?'

"'I'm not going out under any board.'

"'Your family are sending you out, I suppose?'

"'Oh no! My family are not in favor of my going at all.'

"'Well, have you your fare?'

"'I have one dollar.'

"'Perhaps I'd better not try to tell you all that Mr. Brelsford said, but I can still hear him telling me to go

home to my mother. But I did not go home; I went to Africa, as God called me. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

"One of the ladies gave up her room to me and I remained there a day or two. Before I left, Mr. Brelsford asked me to join his work in Assiut, Egypt. I replied, 'Well, since I had no intention of stopping over in Washington, perhaps the Lord led me here just to meet you.' I soon felt that I was to remain with Mr. Brelsford's daughter until we were ready to sail for Egypt.

"Upon arriving in Philadelphia I was invited to speak in the different missions and churches. After saving up forty dollars I went to Thomas Cook & Son in New York City and asked what boats were going to sail for Egypt. They told me that the *S.S. Berlin* would sail October 8, and that a second-class passage would cost about one-hundred dollars. I paid forty dollars down to secure my berth, and wrote home telling my folks when I should leave. My sister wrote and stated that she did not like me to take the trip alone, so was planning to accompany me and see me settled in Egypt. I wrote a reply stating that I would be delighted to have her company.

"The time had nearly come for my sister to arrive in New York. The thought of meeting her without the money for my passage so worried me that I became sick enough to take to my bed. But just then a strange lady came to visit me. After a little chat she knelt and thanked God for the way He had provided for all my needs. I was puzzled to know what she meant, but soon learned that she had the money for me in her purse. She gave me sixty dollars, and immediately I felt better! Then I was asked to speak that evening at the Forty-second Street Mission and I received fifty dollars more. So by the time my sister arrived I had more than enough for my trip to Egypt!" "My God shall supply all your need."

THE VOYAGE

October 8th became a red-letter day in the life of Lillian

Trasher. It had been just four months before that God had called her to leave home and country. In her cabin, Lillian opened her Bible and asked God for a verse of Scripture appropriate to the hour, and the first verse she saw was Acts 7:34" . . . I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groanings and am come down to deliver them. *And now come, I will send thee into Egypt.*"

ARRIVAL

The ocean liner arrived in Alexandria, and Lillian took the little train to Cairo. From here she journeyed 235 miles south along the Nile River to Assiut, Upper Egypt, where her lifework was to be. It is a city of 75,000 population.

HOME

In Reverend Brelsford's mission Lillian settled to study the difficult Arabic language. At first she was lonely in a strange land with strange customs, but as you will see, when she found God's place for her, she became more at home in Egypt than in any place in the world!

HOME LIGHT

Lillian poured forth her life for the castaways, the little diseased babies, filthy and ragged. She has tenderly nursed and cared for them until they have become handsome boys and beautiful girls who are an honor to their country. They have gone forth and founded homes and reared Christian families.

Something for which the entire Christian world can rejoice with Lillian is, that in the forty years of rearing hundreds of girls, not one girl from Lillian's orphanage fell into disrepute! Not one disgraceful story came from the Trasher Orphanage! This is nothing less than a miracle of God's protecting power around the orphanage.

And as for big-hearted "Mama" Lillian, the Egyptians

have a proverb suited to her which says: "She who has children does not die."

Chapter 2 THE GREAT MOTHER OF THE NILE

Every truly great work accomplished in the earth, has been wrought in the face of ugly prejudice from the masses. Lillian's work is no exception.

All her associates felt led to inform her that an orphanage could not succeed in Egypt. They proceeded to offer plausible reasons for their pessimism. They questioned her: "Whom will you take into your orphanage?"

Her reply was: "I will turn no one away who is worthy."

Another question was: "Who will pay the bills? You cannot hope to get enough money from America to finance an orphanage."

As Lillian told the famous author Jerome Beatty:

"If I can't, I'll collect from the Egyptians!"

Lillian did not consider the *COST* but the *CALL*. She believed God would be faithful to His own work.

Her friends heatedly answered: "That's ridiculous, particularly for an American girl."

Lillian vivaciously retorted: "An American girl can do anything if she tries hard enough."

She answered her critics: "Christ broke bread and fish by the Sea of Galilee and fed the hungry multitude. He will do no less in Egypt for His orphans."

BITTER BEGINNINGS

Lillian began her orphanage with one little child. She had been in Egypt only three months when someone asked her to visit a dying woman and pray for her. When she

arrived she found the woman had a small baby girl three months old and that it was being fed from a tin bottle. The milk had become caked and green and stringy, yet the baby was trying to drink it. Soon the mother died while Lillian stood by trying desperately to help. As there was no one else to care for the baby she was given to Lillian.

This poor little creature was lovingly taken to her small room. The child had never had a bath in her life. The clothes had been sewn on to her little body. It would be difficult for you to imagine the stench that came from the child. The little thing cried and cried, making it difficult for the other missionaries in the house to rest. They begged Lillian to take the girl back or give her to someone else, but she refused.

Rather than give up her orphan Lillian went out and rented a small house for \$12.50 per month. She spent all her reserve money for furniture to set the house in order. Then on February 10, she and the baby moved in, thus marking the opening of the Lillian Trasher Orphanage in Assiut, Egypt.

Soon after this Lillian heard of a small brother and sister who had been left with no one to care for them. She rode over on a donkey and got them. Some time later she took another boy. In these beginning years the work did not grow rapidly. Two years after its inception she still had only eight children to care for. The missionaries constantly warned her that she would not be able to financially care for the children. On the other hand, some of the poor ignorant Egyptians thought she had some mysterious ulterior motives. Maybe she would run away from the country with the children and make slaves of them or sell them as merchandise.

In those early days life was very primitive at the orphanage. Lillian made beds with palm branches, and she fed the little ones with whatever she could receive. Not realizing sufficient money from the United States, she went to the Egyptians and told them that they must support their people, that she was caring for them and they would be obliged to feed them. So they did.

A PLAGUE STRIKES

Five months after Lillian took her first child, the devil thought he would close up the orphanage. One of the small boys was taken desperately ill. A doctor was called to her house and he pronounced it bubonic plague. Two others came down with measles. Lillian herself had a fever of 105 degrees. The entire orphanage was taken to the hospital at once and isolated. The Health Inspector dispatched men to fumigate and disinfect the house. Everything in her rented house was spoiled. All the clothing and curtains in the house were dipped into tanks of disinfectant. Lillian says that when God saw them in this plight He gave her Zechariah 9:12; "Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope: even today do I declare that I will render double unto thee." This promise has been a thousand fold fulfilled!

Lillian was soon well, and with the others she moved back into her house and started to care for those that God had called her to mother. Slowly the number began to rise until she had twenty children and then thirty. Again her "Job's comforters" told her she could never feed, clothe and house all the Egyptians who needed aid. But Lillian was adamant.

In eight years Lillian had one hundred children in her home. After it grew to this size the orphanage progressed more rapidly. Lillian could now see that it was better in the formative years to grow slowly in order to provide a good foundation, and that the organization could be worked out slowly with a few children. The basic organization she used then is still used with a thousand children.

It is very interesting that even the Mohammedans of the country say constantly that only God could do such a work as Lillian had done, that no human would be able to receive, in forty years, six thousand orphans and widows and care for them in the way she has cared for them.

LIVING FOR SOMETHING

One day as I was sitting in an office which Lillian pre-

pared for me in Assiut for writing on this biography, I looked up at her and said, "Tell me, what is the thing, greater than any other, you are trying to do in Egypt?" She looked at me and with that twinkle in her eye which has won her multitudes of friends said:

"I have been trying to live in such a way as to pass something tangible to a new generation. I would like to pass on a disposition of Christian character. I live before these orphans every day the way I want them to live in their homes in the land of Egypt. I try to show how to smile, even in the shadows. Every hour of the day and night I do my best to live before them the life I want them to live before their fellow men. I try to transmit to them a life, to know that if they can trust God everything will be all right. I do my best to teach them to have faith in God so that they will be able to face life with a heart of trust. I try to pass on to them a power, a power in prayer, a power with fellow men that they may teach others how to find the way. I would like to show these children the greatness and grandness of sacrifice; how, if I had not come to Egypt, even they might have died of neglect."

I bowed my head into the manuscript for some minutes as I heard these words that came from the heart of a great woman who seeks to make great men and great women in Egypt.

Chapter 3

SIX THOUSAND HAVE FED AT HER TABLE

The greatest message in this book is the supernatural provision of the necessities of life for thousands of underprivileged orphans and widows through the dynamic faith of one Christian woman!

A major lesson to be learned by all, is that the only way to do great things for God is to do small things first. To those who are willing to do the small things God is willing to assist them to do greater things. Lillian Trasher began with one small diseased baby and since then God has given her more than six thousand children to feed. About five thousand of these children are scattered throughout Egypt today and look back to the orphanage as their home, where they learned to love and live. The responsibility of caring for one thousand dependent individuals would overwhelm most people. But growing up with the responsibility is something else. Lillian Trasher grew in soul as the orphanage grew in numbers. The soul of this great woman was clearly revealed when she told me that she remembered the first donation that she ever received for the orphanage. It was given to her by a telegraph boy. It was only thirty-five cents. The boy gave the money because he had had a terrible headache and it left him and this was an appreciation offering to God. It was whispered around the city of Assiut that it was always good to give an offering to the orphanage when God had been good to you! Because of this oftentimes when there were lavish feasts in the city, especially among Assiut's rich families or when someone had been sick and recovered, they sent an offering

to the orphanage and sometimes an entire beef to be cooked for the orphans.

Lillian says that from the very inception of the work, God had promised to supply her needs. She was the only one to decide the size of the needs! For this reason she never refused entrance to anyone who was in need. As an eternal memorial to God, the orphans have never missed a meal, and the home has never gone heavily into debt. In the early years, when Lillian was young and impetuous, she found it difficult to wait for God to supply the needs. She moved out among the people and asked for donations to take care of their own orphans. Lillian was a familiar sight, riding on a small donkey from village to village, gathering rice, onions, beans, and wheat for flour for her orphans. The Egyptians took her for one of themselves and shared with her their goods.

During many of these years Lillian was obliged to trust God *day by day, one day at a time*. She said she did not think she would have enjoyed the life half so much if she had known where the money was coming from.

An ordinary example of how the Lord provides: Lillian got up one morning and there was less than five dollars in the entire orphanage. When the mail came there was no money in the mail. One of her older girls who shared some responsibility said, "What are we going to do, Mama?" She replied, "We will let the Lord provide."

As she went about among the townsfolk that day she asked that the Lord would guide her steps. She went to visit one of her former girls who was sick. Then she went to visit a very rich widow and while there the lady said she was going to send something to the orphanage. She did. Six hundred loaves of bread and six hundred oranges arrived! Lillian visited another sick lady and she gave her five dollars. On the street she met an Egyptian girl friend who asked her to go for a ride with her. Lillian went. They met her brother who gave her twenty-five dollars. She went home with the girl for dinner that evening. After dinner she heard of the Nile steamer which brings tourists from the capital city of Cairo. As it approaches down the Nile it whistles

for Assiut. Lillian went home, got some of her books and tracts, and took them down to the dock to hand to the passengers. At the boat six dollars was handed to her!

On one occasion when money was very short, and there were no immediate prospects, after prayer, she tried something new. Lillian refused to go into debt. She called the children into the chapel and explained to them that she did not feel it was the Lord's will to go into debt and that God had not provided sufficient money lately. Therefore she had resolved to send the children away to distant relatives and friends or wherever she could locate them. However, she promised that she would bring them back again when God supplied their needs. This announcement had electrifying effects. When Mama Lillian got this far the children began to wail as she had never heard them before. It was impossible for her to make any further explanations, because she could not hear her voice above the crying of hundreds of children. The little boys especially cried and prayed as they had never prayed before. After prayer she arose and told them that she would not send them home, that if God would not supply the money, they would all do without together. But the very next morning one hundred dollars came in and before that was spent, more money was coming in from Egypt and other countries.

In retrospect Lillian evaluates this experience in that the Lord wanted the children also to partake in this life of faith.

NO FOOD FOR TOMORROW

A few days ago a rich Egyptian, who knew nothing about trusting God, looked at me in utter surprise and said: "Do you mean to say you have no food for tomorrow."

I said: "Yes..."

"Awful! Will you be able to sleep tonight?"

One of my girl friends laughed when she heard him say this. He turned to her and said, "It is no joke. She says that there is no food for tomorrow!"

The young lady said, "Why Lillian never has any food

for tomorrow!"

He said, "What will you do if the money does not come in and you are not able to collect it?"

I told him that during the twenty-three years the children never had to miss a meal, and that I have had many hard tests and much hard work, but that God has never failed. The next day after this, a man called in the afternoon and asked to see me. He told me that he had been to a village near here and had met a man who asked him if he would take some money to the Orphanage. He handed me \$100.

GIVING AWAY THE ORPHANS' CLOTH

"You will never be able to realize what a wonderful year this has been to me since we started buying only what we had money to pay for. The Lord has taught me some wonderful lessons. Last week a poor widow woman came to me asking for clothes for her children. Our children were very badly in need of clothes, and I had only enough cloth for about two-days' cutting. I did not say anything to her, only that I would see about it before she left; but I felt that too much was expected of me, when we ourselves needed bolts of cloth to clothe the orphans. Suddenly someone seemed to say to me, 'Why do you complain? You have not cut the cloth which you have on hand. When it is cut more will come in.'

"I went at once to the storeroom and got the clothes for the poor woman. A few days later as I was cutting the last jacket and the last piece of cloth, I put the scissors down and said: 'Now, Lord, the cloth is finished, and You promised that when it was finished You would send more.' I had not yet gotten up from the cutting table when a man came in and handed me \$5.00. I was very tired, so I decided to rest in the garden. As I was resting, I thought of the cloth and said, 'Now Lord, we need money for the cloth.' The fact was that we did not have a cent for food or anything, except five dollars which had just come in. About ten minutes after I prayed that little prayer, a man came up to me and handed me ten dollars. I was so delighted I forgot

that I was tired and went to town and spent the whole fifteen dollars for cloth. The next day was Sunday. After the service a very weak, sickly-looking Egyptian gentleman walked into the church and said, 'I was out for a ride, and as I passed the Orphanage I began to wonder how you were getting along.' I told him that the Lord was meeting the needs day by day. He handed me twenty-five dollars, which supplied the food needed."

THE GOVERNOR OF RHODE ISLAND

An Egyptian farmer used to sell syrup to the orphanage. The supply that he would bring on his camel would cost fifteen or twenty dollars. One morning when he came there were only thirty dollars in the orphanage to operate it for that day. Lillian sent word to the door that it would be impossible for her to spend half of all the money they had just for syrup. The teacher who took the word to the man said to Lillian, "Oh, please buy the syrup. It is very good syrup and we need it very badly." Lillian still refused knowing they had so little money, but the Egyptian girl looked at Mama so sadly that she yielded and said, "Oh well, buy it. The Lord will provide somehow."

That same morning a boat of tourists traveling from Cairo to Luxor stopped in Assiut. A number of the tourists got off and came over to visit the orphanage, among them the ex-governor of the State of Rhode Island. After he had looked through the orphanage, he handed Lillian two fifty-dollar bills. He also invited her over to the boat to have lunch with them. Here she was given thirty dollars more. The former governor of Rhode Island was very much touched when he heard about the syrup and that he had helped in a dire need for the children.

HEAVY UNDERWEAR

One winter the chilly blast began to come upon the orphanage. The children asked for their heavy underwear, but Lillian had to explain to them that she did not have

money to buy it and that they must help her pray for it. That same afternoon a young man, the inspector of the Egyptian bank at Assiut, came over and took an inspection tour of the orphanage. He said very little; then returned to the bank. Lillian thought no more about his visit, but the next morning she received a letter from the inspector with a draft for fifty dollars enclosed. She went downtown that day and purchased the material for the underwear.

PLANTING IN EGYPTIAN SOIL

From the very beginning Lillian discovered that if she lived in Egypt, she would be obliged to collect money from Egyptians for her orphanage. It entailed much weariness and hardship physically for her. She traveled miles and miles on donkey going from village to village speaking on behalf of the orphanage and receiving the gifts of the people. Very often in the village there was no place for her to sleep. She would sleep in the police station and continue the next day to collect for the livelihood of her orphans. Thus she incurred many dangers as well as hardships, but Lillian became known, far and wide, as the great Nile Mother caring for Egypt's unfortunates.

One day an Egyptian told Lillian that the children needed her at the home and she should not spend so much time traveling. She explained her financial condition to him and he said, "There are enough rich people in Assiut to help you, so you will not have to over-tax your strength. The children need you." He began by subscribing a certain amount each month and said that he would interest his friends in doing likewise. In this way the Lord used an Egyptian man to lighten the burden, so that Lillian would not have to undergo the tremendous strain of going from place to place asking for food for her orphans.

EGYPTIAN SCHOOL CHILDREN HELP

"It is a lesson not only to me and to the children, but all of the people of Assiut are watching with wonder to see

how the orphans are being fed and cared for, while others are in such great need. Not only are they looking on and wondering; they are all trying to help with whatever little gift they are able to give. The schools here have been showing a lovely spirit. They get the girls of each class to come out and visit the Orphanage; each one brings some rice, sugar, oranges, cloth or money. This has a very good effect on the school children as well as their help being a blessing to us. The missionaries of the other missions have also shown a very great spirit of love and sacrifice towards us. Many of them have helped us this year by sending money and clothes."

To assure Lillian that her orphans would have clean Grade A milk she developed a fine dairy of Jersey cattle

The orphanage also has its own bakery. During the day several women make the bread and place it in the sunshine to rise. It takes all night, every night, to bake the flat, round Egyptian loaves to be used for the institution the following day.

This is a part of the tremendous story of how a single American girl adopted six thousand Egyptians and did well!

Chapter 4 THE ORPHANS' STORY

It will be especially appealing to the reader to know the case histories of a few of the orphans. It is indeed a volume of heart-touching happenings that makes up the record of the Lillian Trasher Home. Their stories are as varied as human tragedy varies. Almost every one has a different story. Usually it is calamity of some violent sort that brings the little ones to live with Lillian.

HOW ORPHANS ARE RECEIVED

Possibly there is not a similar institution in the world. Lillian does not wait until she has a room for an orphan, or a widow, to receive new ones. She never had an empty bed waiting for new children. But oftentimes the little children sleep, one at the foot and one at the head of the bed! When there are too many like this, it is imperative to build a new dormitory. This is the way the orphanage grows.

“I see them come crowding, crowding,
Children of want and pain;
Dark sorrow their eyes enshrouding
Where joy's touch should have lain.

“I cry in love unsatisfied
For these without the fold;
My arms are opened wide
These weary ones to hold.”

When we were looking through all the great buildings of the orphanage, I asked to see the nursery. Here we found the youngest and tiniest of the babies which only weighed three pounds! What a pitiful little mite it was. At first Lillian did not expect this one to live, but it was growing every day. Its mother died in childbirth and its despairing father gave it to Lillian to rear.

Another of the small babies in the nursery was received when only a few days old. Its mother went suddenly insane and would have positively nothing to do with her own little child. Fearing the unbalanced mother would harm the baby, the broken-hearted father brought it to Lillian.

TWINS ARRIVE

A man came to the orphanage early one morning with two wee newborn babes. He explained pitifully with his head downcast that the mother had just died. These babes were dressed in filthy rags and the basket in which they were lying was full of dirty hay. Lillian received these little twins and discovered that one of them weighed three pounds and the other four. The man left without even waiting to tell their names or the name of the village from which he came.

Lillian named one of them Clayton, after Miss Clayton, an English missionary who assisted her for some years. The other she named Russell. The following day, Lillian was invited to lunch with some friends. She told them the story of her twins. One of the American doctors from the American Mission Hospital was lunching with them. When he heard the story he said that he would like very much to help Lillian by keeping the twins for a few months for her. She was delighted, because she realized the infants must have special care if they were to live.

The doctors in the local mission hospital were very kind to Lillian. They had a room especially prepared for five or six of her weakest babies. When all these beds are filled and she sends a new one, they pick out the fattest one and send it home and receive a new one! Best of all,

they do not charge the orphanage one cent for helping to keep her babies. Lillian, in her unsophisticated manner said, "It means so much to me to have such helpful friends."

THE NILE BABY

A neighbor who lives near the orphanage came with a new baby for Lillian. Her story was: "I was coming from the city and walking across the big Nile bridge. When I arrived in the center I saw a blind man just about to throw this baby in the river. I rushed up to him, grabbed the child, and cried: 'You wicked man, you must not throw a living baby into the river.' The old man mumbled: 'I have no place to keep her. Now as you have stopped me, she is yours!' He left without even giving the name of the child." Miss Trasher felt she had received a Moses, saved from the muddy Nile waters.

One little baby arrived so thin and sickly that those who saw him said he could never live. His father had been murdered in a fight and when his mother received the news she was so shocked that she lost mental balance and had to be put into an asylum.

Said is a lovely boy of seven years. Before he was born his poor mother was dying with tuberculosis. She was a walking skeleton; the doctor said that she would die as soon as this baby was born. No one ever dreamed that the child could live. But such is God's way that when the baby was born it was a lovely baby. Lillian showed him to his poor mother, then took him to the orphanage. The mother never saw Said again, as she died a few days after his birth.

HANDS BURN OFF

A sad case is of a little girl who came to the home. When a baby she had fallen into a fire and her two little hands were destroyed. One hand was a sort of club. The other, her left hand, had the first and third fingers partly left; the other fingers were all twisted and grown to her

palm. She was not able to hold anything, in fact she was absolutely helpless. When her mother died they brought her to the orphanage. Lillian took her to the Egyptian Government Hospital where they kindly tended to her for months. They were able to open about half an inch between the bones of her first finger on her right hand; she is able to hold some things. The doctors did a wonderful job on her left hand. By taking skin from her legs they were able to straighten out all of her fingers. They do not look normal but she is able to write, sew, knit and do anything the other girls do. She is about the brightest girl in the school and is a consecrated Christian. She finished high school and is teaching the orphans.

One morning one of the older girls came running over to "Mama" Lillian's house and said: "Mama, there is a woman with her children at the gate and she wants you to let her stay here with her children. Lillian went out to see and found a poor little half-blinded Egyptian with three small boys, ages five, six, and seven, and a little girl four. She asked the woman what she wanted. The woman replied: "My husband is dead. The people of my village told me to take the children to the Lord's house. So I have brought them. Please may I stay with my children?" Lillian asked her to return to her village and leave the children in the orphanage. The little half-blinded widow replied: "Go back for what? I have nothing but my children." That night the overcrowded quarters of the widows had one more with which to exchange stories of the past and of the blessings of the present.

It will not surprise you to know that when the orphans marry and have families, if trouble strikes, they know of no one like "Mama" to help. Recently a former girl of the home brought her husband, who had contracted an incurable disease, for Miss Trasher to tell them what to do. Another came rushing over with her baby in her arms saying that it had fallen from the housetop. After an examination in the orphanage clinic, and a prayer with the distracted mother, Miss Lillian sent her "daughter" and "granddaughter" back home.

Another morning a poor widow and three small children knocked at the door. Ragged, tattered clothes covered them. They were unbathed, their hair matted, their faces pinched with hunger. And this is the way most of them come. But what a difference a few days of love and care make in their appearance. Here the wounds are healed and the unequal struggle with cruel existence leveled out, as the little ones prepare for life, and the widows work and live with their little ones.

Chapter 5

MIRACLE DIARY BY THE NILE

Miss Trasher kept a diary with meticulous care from the beginning of her work. This makes it easy to render exact accounts of incidents that took place. Shall we read a few pages of this exciting "miracle diary by the Nile."

Oct. 11. A very poor woman came to us today. She is ill and blind, she has three children and her husband has been out of work for eight months. The children have absolutely nothing to eat. She walked to the orphanage, about four miles. We are nearly out of money ourselves, but I thought that poor Toffa was in a worse condition than the orphanage, so I gave her five dollars, a dozen loaves of bread, some rice, sugar, and six bars of soap. Then I took her to town in the car and bought her some tomatoes, potatoes, cooking butter, and several pounds of meat. I told her she could come and stay with us after she was confined.

Faheema said that we needed some rice and sugar, so after I took Toffa home I went to Badeer's grocery to buy them. One of the clerks asked me if I wanted to buy a large sack of the best rice. I told him that I wanted only a basket of medium grade rice and a box of sugar. Mr. Badeer came out and told the man to get me the sack of good rice, a big box of sugar and one hundred pounds of soap. I said, "No I cannot buy so much rice, and I really don't need any soap today." He said, "Take it and keep it until you do need it." He filled my car with boxes of blueing, buttons, etc., and I had to send Habib with the donkey cart to bring the rice and other things!

In the evening Dr. Aziz came and brought me fifty dollars which Mr. Albert Khyatt had given him to give as a thank offering. He had just become engaged. Dr. Aziz also gave five dollars of his own money.

We gave Toffa five dollars and God sent us fifty-five! We gave her a few pounds of rice; God gave us a whole sack, worth about twelve dollars! We gave the poor woman six bars of soap and we were given one hundred pounds! She received a few pounds of sugar and we a whole box full! Mr. Badeer had never given us anything before.

Nov. 9. Hallen Wessa has become engaged today to Leon and has sent me an invitation to the reception. Her mother enclosed a check for \$250.00 so I paid all my debts. The American mail on Monday also brought us one hundred dollars. "Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

Nov. 16. This morning's mail brought an envelope with no letter or name, containing a money order for fifty dollars. I went to town and bought forty dollars worth of cloth. Six packages came from the dear folks back in the U.S.A.

Nov. 19. This is a busy day. We are trying to have everything nice as we are expecting the tourists between four and five o'clock. I am tired. I do hope they will give me something for the children... The tourists all came, crowds and crowds of them. Some came in; others stayed out in front in their carriages. Our little boys gave out pamphlets about the orphanage, and the whole family of children went out to see the people. They did look so sweet. I was proud of them. All who went up to the Nursery were greatly touched as they saw the rows of tiny beds and wee babies in them; some with their bottles and others sitting on the carpet playing.

While I was showing the tourists around, a rather poor looking old Egyptian walked down toward the main building. I stopped and spoke to him, asking him to come in. He said, "No, not now." Some of the tourists handed Miss Ryott money for the orphanage, which totaled thirteen dollars. After everyone left I saw the old man walking along and so again asked him to come in. As he entered the drawing

room he handed me a bill. It was fifty dollars. I nearly laughed out loud. It was such a good lesson to me. I had been working all week to fix up the children and the place for the rich tourists and they gave me thirteen dollars, and a poor old Egyptian whom one scarcely notices, hands me a fifty dollar bill! "God's ways are not our ways."

Nov. 20. I went over to see Mrs. Nasif Wessa and stayed to dinner. While I was there my secretary telephoned saying that Dr. Zackie had just brought up two sheep for the children's supper... When I reached home the girl in charge of the nursery came and said that the two sheep were not enough meat to make any soup for the babies. I said, "Go to the orphanage kitchen and tell the cook to give you some for the nursery." She came back and said there was none left. Then I told her to cook some rice.

I went out and sat on the bridge in front of my house. It was dark, but a car drove up and stopped. I heard a man say, "Well, don't stay long." Another said, "You help me lift it from this side." I said to one of the girls who was sitting with me, "That sounds as though we are getting something." I arose and went out to meet the man. Though it was quite dark, I saw two men carrying in half a beef. As they put it down on one of the tables, one of the little girls said, "I told the babies to pray for God to send them some meat." I called Malazama and said, "Go light the stove and cook the meat. The babies can have soup for breakfast tomorrow!"

Nov. 21. American mail brought in about \$175. I went to town and spent over one hundred dollars for food, blankets, cloth and bedding. It is now nearly midnight. We can say with grateful hearts, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

Nov. 22. I started writing at sunrise, had breakfast, dinner and supper at my writing desk. Lageah, the baby we found on the bridge, died last night.

Nov. 30. We are all out of money again. Mrs. Wessa just telephoned to say she was sending fifty ardabs of wheat (enough to last us five weeks and worth about four hundred dollars). American mail brought eight dollars.

Dec. 1. I went to town three times. Oma Amin sent three

bolts of cloth for the boys. Twenty-five dollars came in. Mr. Nashid is ill; his temperature is 103 degrees. (He is my head worker and bookkeeper; also married one of my girls.)

Dec. 3. I haven't a cent. I feel ill, but I cannot go to bed as Mr. Nashid is sick and I have to see about the boys carrying the bricks. Oh, it is awful to be ill and not have enough money and so many needs. I went to the Post Office to see if any money had come. There was a letter asking me to take a poor widow and her child.

Dec. 7. Edna Wessa sent me one hundred dollars and Faheem Effendy sent twenty-five. I paid Hanna Effendy one hundred dollars to pay the bill for the paint and nails. I just got the money all safely spent and in comes one of the big boys saying that seven boys who are taking the Government school examination must have ten dollars at once! Well, I didn't have any, so I went to Assiut to see what I could do. I soon had ninety dollars given to me, so I gave the boys the seventy and had a little left over.

Dec. 24. The Lord has supplied us with a lovely Christmas. We had a fine time with the children. We made bags and filled them with nuts and candy. Oh, how the children enjoyed them! We gave out the toys last week; everyone got something nice. The women all got underclothes. Oh, I was tired when it was all over, but the children had made me so many nice Christmas presents that I forgot how tired I was

Jan. 10. I left Cairo today. Wadeah (the lady who was ill) is doing fine. She gave me one hundred dollars and her husband gave me another hundred. The baby's grandmother gave fifty aradabs of wheat (worth about four hundred dollars) and Camille Sanad sent me fifty dollars. Quite a lot came in from America, so we are once more comfortable.

Jan. 31. We got three new-born babies this month; their mothers died when they were born — Amena, Obgy, and Marium.

Feb. 23. Mr. Doss Gholter died today and his family had two calves killed at the gate as his body was taken out, for the good of his soul. They sent the meat to us. We have had meat three times this week.

There are several other striking entries in Sister Lil-

lian's diary:

THANKSGIVING DAY: Many times God not only sends help, but sends the very thing we are in need of. Two weeks ago, the woman who has charge of the little boys' nursery, came to me saying that the children's mattresses were torn and so badly worn through, that some of them were nearly sleeping on the springs. I told her that I was very, very sorry, but I had no money at all and that I thought all last year's cotton was used up. I told her that they would have to pray for God to send help. I sent for the woman in charge of bedding. As we were all three talking about it, and as she was telling them that there was not a bit of cotton left, I looked out of the window, and saw a large motor truck drive up, piled with huge sacks of cotton (worth about fifty dollars), a gift to the orphanage.

FRIDAY: We are six hundred dollars behind: it is the last of the month and tomorrow we will have to pay three hundred in salaries to our teachers and workers. The American mail came bringing four dollars. The man from whom we had been buying our bread said that he will not let us have any bread tomorrow, as we owe him \$150. He is a poor man and needs the money. Hundreds of children and widows are looking to me for food.

THE ONE THOUSAND DOLLAR CHECK

Over three weeks ago, God put it on the heart of one of His children to send me an offering. So, faithful to the "still small voice," a dear brother away over in Kansas went down to his bank and made out a check — signed it, and wrote a letter — but as often man fails, even those who have the best of hearts, this dear brother in addressing the letter to me made a great mistake. He addressed it to "Assiut, India" instead of to "Assiut, Egypt." So when the thousands of letters were being placed in the mail bags ready to be put on the ships to India or Egypt, our loving Father knew that this letter must not go to India as directed, but must be sent to Egypt, or our babies would have to go without bread. So He took care of it and had it

put into one of the Egypt mail bags, even though Egypt was nowhere written on the letter! It was not delayed a single day. How did He do it? I don't know. I shall never know in this life, but I do know "He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways."

On the afternoon of the day of our great need one of our little boys went to the Post Office and found the letter which God had taken care of. He brought it home and I opened it. It contained a check for one thousand dollars. I cannot describe the joy of us all as we saw how God had supplied our needs. We paid the six hundred dollars which we owed, paid the three hundred in salaries and had one hundred to go on with. How everyone in town who heard this rejoiced with us! "Before they call, I will answer." (All of Assiut loves to hear of Lillian's "ups and downs!")

The other day, a poor, ragged little boy came to the door and said, "Lady, is this the place where the poor are accepted?" His words seemed to sink into my heart. There are so many places where the poor are not accepted. I just prayed that God would make this a place with open doors where the poor and needy would always be welcome and always find help.

"These things don't *just happen*, as so many people try to believe. For forty years they have always '*just happened*' at the right time. 'Your Father knoweth ye have need of these things.'

"When we keep our eyes on Him, everything seems easy, oh, so easy. But when we begin to look at circumstances, we shake and tremble with fear.

"Pray for me, that I will not look at my hundreds of children who have to be clothed, fed and educated, and the very hard times financially all over the world, but that I may keep my eyes on His promises and know that all is well, because He careth for us."

Chapter 6 TEARS OF THE NILE MOTHER

One must not forget that in a work of the magnitude of Lillian's there were deep disappointments as well as great rejoicings. There were problems with government, with wars, with disease, with unfaithful people. But Lillian's philosophy was that of David: "He that goeth forth and weepeth . . . shall doubtless come again with rejoicing."

GOVERNMENT TROUBLE

One of the most trying times of her life resulted from a missionary in the city of Port-Said who excessively disciplined a Mohammedan girl who was in his custody. The authorities heard of the incident. The Mohammedans started an uproar against Christian schools and orphanages which swept through all Egypt. The Mohammedans in a great outburst of anger began to collect thousands of dollars to build new orphanages all over the country, so they could remove any Mohammedan orphans from the Christian institutions. For a time the situation was, indeed, quite tense, but days of better understanding later followed.

The Governor in Assiut province sent several high officials to inspect everything in the Lillian Trasher Orphanage. These inspectors spent several hours looking over all the details. But this is just what Lillian likes, so she assisted them. They said they were delighted at the work, but that they were going to build orphanages, and so would be taking away from her all the children of the Mohammedan faith. At this time Lillian had about seventy children of

Mohammedan parents.

While they were examining her orphanage, she told them everything, keeping back nothing. She explained that the Mohammedan children went to all of the Christian services, just as the other children. She told them how the Lord supplied the needs of the orphanage by faith. She gave them several booklets telling of the work and copies of her financial reports. After hearing it all, the head inspector asked Lillian if she would present him with a Bible. She did gladly.

Later the Governor of the State sent for Lillian and thanked her for what she had done for the poor children of Egypt, but he said that it would be necessary to remove the Mohammedan children.

Ten days slowly passed with a cloud of anxiety hanging over the orphanage. "Ma" Lillian did not know when she might lose a great number of her dear little children. As the days passed she began to think they were not going to do anything.

But on the tenth morning, before breakfast, the same officials walked in. Lillian was frightened at their presence and remembers she was trembling as she invited them to come in. She asked if there was anything wrong. The inspector said, "No, there is nothing wrong." She asked if they had received a reply from the Ministry in Cairo, and they said they had. The orders were to take all the Mohammedan children at once.

Lillian could have screamed; however, she was thankful that she was not sent out of the country as the missionary was who had overly disciplined the Mohammedan child in the city of Port-Said.

Words cannot describe the sad scene as the officers led seventy of her children away, crying as they went, saying, "Good-bye, Mama! Good-bye, Mama!" It was a life-long farewell.

DEATH IN THE ORPHANAGE

Jerome Beatty, noted magazine writer and author of a

book, "Americans All Over," went on a fifteen-month safari into strange far places in search of Americans, who were doing interesting things. Mr. Beatty was sent out by DeWitt Wallace, the proprietor of Reader's Digest. In his 46,500 mile trek he met our heroine, Lillian Trasher, and called her "the greatest wonder in Egypt!" He tells this interesting story:

"Recently three of her youngest died at the American Mission Hospital during an epidemic of dysentery. She was inconsolable. 'My babies are gone!' she groaned.

"A doctor pleaded, 'But Miss Lillian, you have hundreds more.'

"She lifted a tear-stained face and sobbed, 'Yes, but I can't spare even one!'

It's only a mother's love that can fill a thousand hearts!"

CLARK MEMORIAL CHURCH

Many times Lillian had prayed and cried to God for a church building large enough for her great family. God witnessed the tears of the Nile Mother and gave an answer. An elderly gentleman in America by the name of Clark sent Lillian one dollar. When she wrote a note of appreciation, she enclosed a small pamphlet describing the work and mentioning the fact she had no adequate chapel. Although Mr. Clark was ninety years old he wrote that rather than leaving something in his will for the orphanage he would send money to build a church! Lillian sent him pictures of groundbreaking, cornerstone-laying, the walls going up, the roof going on, and windows being glazed. Though an old man, he saw "Clark Memorial Church" built. Miss Lillian's tears dried away in rejoicing. She especially petitioned the Lord to permit Mr. Clark's soul, enroute to heaven to pass by the church, which he so dearly loved!

CHOLERA

Cholera is a frightening word in Egypt. It is a pitiless

killer. It strikes fast and destroys human life in a few hours. One autumn the dread monster struck the land of Egypt. Thousands died like flies over the land.

Lillian decided that during the epidemic she should not accept new children. In a place like the orphanage such a plague would be devastating. The following Sunday she was coming out of church and met a poor man dressed in rags. With him were two thin underfed little boys. The old man said the boys' mother was dead and that they had walked ten days to reach Assiut. Lillian felt she could not turn them away so took the children in.

Early the next morning one of the night-duty girls, who was in charge of the "second size" babies in the nursery came to Lillian's room and said the smallest new boy was vomiting and had diarrhea. These are the two main signs of cholera. Lillian went and observed the child and concluded that he was very ill. She sent for a good friend of the orphanage, Doctor Risgalla. He agreed that the child was seriously ill. They decided to report the case. The child was isolated, but died in a few hours. A culture was taken and sent to Cairo for examination. It was positive! The child died of cholera.

Can you imagine Lillian's broken heart? The child was in the nursery with fifty other children. He had vomited on the nurse, on the bed and on the floor. With lightning speed her orphanage was under federal quarantine. Doctors and health inspectors from Cairo came and again injected all the children against Cholera. D.D.T. was sprayed in every room of the orphanage. Soldiers were placed at the gates to forbid going and coming.

NOT ONE CHILD TOOK CHOLERA! Soon the quarantine was lifted; the soldiers were sent away; then a great thanksgiving service was conducted in Clark Memorial Church, the orphanage chapel. That service was one of the most wonderful Lillian had seen in Egypt.

TIRES

During a period of rationing the tires on Lillian's car

became worn. The orphanage is a long way from town and a number of trips have to be made each day on business. Lillian had the old ones patched again and again – but every trip to town meant a flat tire. And the bumping from the many patches made riding rough. There were tires on the black market at one hundred and twenty-five dollars each! But even if Lillian had the money her conscience would not have permitted this kind of business.

Lillian prayed. Then, characteristic of her energetic life, she looked around to see where the answer would be coming from! She applied to the federal government in Cairo. The answer was, “No tires.” Miss Trasher called on the American Ambassador who was a friend of the orphanage. He threw up his hands and said: “Tires? Where can I get tires?” Lillian went to the Minister of Social Affairs and he promised her the first one to arrive in the country.

Finally Lillian told a South African friend: “I shall look no more; and I shall ask no more. I will believe God to send the necessary tires.”

The next day when she arrived back in Assiut her car was waiting at the station with two brand new tires! Lillian exclaimed to Mena her assistant: “Did you buy those on the black market?” He said: “No, Mr. Naseem heard that you needed tires for your car and decided your work was more important than his (a filling station operator) so he gave these to you and will salvage the rest of his car!”

And so the tears of the Nile Mother were repeatedly turned to joy.

Chapter 7

EGYPTIAN ORPHANS BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD

In this great institution that Lillian Trasher raised up under God, she realized from its inception that "man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

As a Christian father or mother in America watch their little ones grow, praying constantly for the marvelous hour of decision when their child will become "born again" (John 3:7), so Lillian watched her huge family and prayed for the day when mighty revival would sweep through her orphanage.

The power of God swept through the orphanage like a great and terrific cleansing fire. The children seemed to never tire of praying. If they dismissed the services they would find them slipping back into the chapel and crying unto God during the night. Even then, as the workers would go to their rooms, with their lights turned out, the children could be heard praying.

The revival touched the hearts of those employed in the orphanage. The cook, the assistant cook, the chief house-keeper, and some of the washer-women were wonderfully saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. Some of them saw visions.

When this phenomenal revival struck the orphanage it began with the girls. All of the older girls were saved; the widows were saved, and lastly the boys. No one can imagine the joy in the heart of Lillian, after planting the seed for years, to see such a spiritual harvest. Her Egyptian orphans had become children of God!

One night Lillian felt led to conduct a special meeting in the church. She took a chair and sat on the platform and just opened her heart to the nearly one thousand children. She told them she was simply broken hearted over the spiritual condition in the orphanage. She became so broken in spirit she could hardly speak. The Lord was with her in this. When the girls saw their "Mama" weeping, they also began to cry. Some of the more careless girls moved from their seats and came to the altar and knelt and began to pray. Others caught hold of "Mama's" hand and asked pardon for all they had done. There was not a dry eye in the entire church building.

Guest speakers came to the orphanage and sure enough, the harvest was ripe again. The Lord started working with everyone in the orphanage – boys, girls, women, everyone. The services would last for hours.

LILLIAN VIEWED THE LIGHT

"When I look at the hundreds of bright little faces looking up to me on Sunday morning in church, I feel as I think a sculptor must feel when he walks through the stone yard looking for a suitable piece of marble, unlovely though it be, out of which, by hard work he will chisel a figure of grace and beauty – the child of his imagination which will be an object of beauty for generations. I feel just like that when I look at my children, and I wonder what talents and graces are hidden, by ignorance and neglect, in their young lives which could be chiseled out of these little boys and girls of flesh and blood, living souls into whom God has breathed the breath of life eternal. And this beauty is not for generations but for eternity! If I don't act as sculptor it may not be done."

Without doubt, Egypt, for generations to come, will rise up and call "Mama Lillian" blessed, for kindling a light that brightens the paths of those who walked in darkness.

One evening as Lillian walked in the garden and observed the great quiet buildings where hundreds of her boys and girls were sleeping, her soul filled with the

wonder of it all.

Here was an American lady, standing in the midst of an immense compound, housing about a thousand sleeping children. Soon they would be men and women filling places in the land of Egypt. Her eyes fell on an old rocking chair which had been left in the garden. Previously an American doctor had died and as the family had returned to America, she had bought the chair. She mused: "Yesterday it was the doctor's; today it is mine; tomorrow it will belong to someone else. Today is mine to teach these hundreds of little children; tomorrow they will pass on what I teach them today."

Suppose I had not come to Egypt, what would have become of all my dear children?"