Projects for a mosque in London were mooted since the beginning of this century. The first promoters were Indian Muslims with English education or connection who resided in or frequently visited England. One of the earliest projects was sponsored by the Aga Khan who in November 1910 called a meeting at the Ritz Hotel in London to discuss details. As a result a committee was appointed under the chairmanship of Syed Ameer Ali, the Indian Muslim lawyer who was then a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. Contributions were received and a trust was instituted much later. But so far as could now be discovered no tangible progress towards building a mosque was made. In 1940 the assets of the trust amounted to only £10,417.¹

Towards the end of 1912 Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din, B.A., LL.B., left a legal practice in Lahore and went to England for the purpose of

preaching Islam. With three friends he established a mission in a small country house adjacent to the tiny Shah Jehan Mosque (internal measurements $16 \times 16$ feet) in Woking in the County of Surrey, some twenty-five miles to the west of London. Public lectures were given in the mission house and members of the mission and their friends prayed in the mosque. On the occasion of the two feasts the large congregation prayed partly in the mosque and partly, weather permitting, on the lawn, as early photographs clearly show.

A monthly journal, *Muslim India and Islamic Review*, better known by the second half of its title, was launched almost immediately in 1913. To judge from the early issues the mission was remarkably successful, counting among its converts women with literary talents. One of them composed a poem on "The Little Mosque" with a crescent "beneath an alien sky". The first line of a poem on the mosque by another woman was "Thou edifice of beauty!".\(^2\)

But the mission's greatest news was published under the arresting headline of "Muslim Peer", announcing the conversion of Lord Headley.\(^3\) Rowland George Allanson Allanson-Winn was born in London in 1855 and was educated at Westminster School and Trinity College, Cambridge (Mathematical Tripos, 1878). At first he engaged in educational work and then in civil engineering in England, Ireland and India. In January 1913 he succeeded his cousin as the 5th Lord Headley, Baron Allanson and Winn in the peerage of Ireland, and as the 11th Baronet of Nastell, Yorkshire, and as the 5th Baronet of Little Worley, Essex.\(^4\)

Later in the same year he embraced Islam. The part that the Woking mission and Khwaja Kamal-ud-Din may have played in bringing about this important conversion is obscure. But one thing is not in doubt, the close friendship between the British nobleman and the Muslim missionary. The pages of the mission's journal show the great enthusiasm with which the distinguished convert was received. He was showered with complimentary titles such as *Rahmatullah* (the Mercy of God), *Saifullah* (the Sword of God) and more frequently

\(^2\) *Islamic Review*, vol. II, No. 6 (July 1914), p. 256 (Poem by Alice Welch); vol. III, No. 3 (March 1915), p. 117 (Poem by Marie Perkins).
