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Challenge
and
Counter
Challenge



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CHALLENGE AND COUNTER-CHALLENGE

A Missionary Magazine for Young People desirous of learning more about the challenge of Islam, and of helping to counter it by the proclamation of the Gospel.

Issued by the

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The Children's Crusades.

"Veni Creator Spiritus," the words of this beautiful Latin hymn rang out over the waters from the lips of 5,000 children. They were standing crowded together on the decks of two ships lying at anchor in Marseilles harbour. The children's voices reflected the joy and gratitude in their hearts for what they thought was a wonderful answer to prayer, for the two merchant owners of the ships had offered "for the cause of God and without charge" to convey the children to Palestine.



View of Nazareth, Palestine

But why so many children and why did they want to go on that journey? Alas! when the full story is known, that "so many" becomes "so few"—for those 5,000 were all that remained of a company of 30,000 strong who had assembled some months previously in the city of Vendome, a town in France. They had met together under the leadership of a boy named Stephen and they pledged themselves to recover the Holy Cross on which the Lord Jesus Christ died, from the hand of the infidel.

This took place in the year 1212 and the belief then was that the actual Cross of Calvary had been desecrated by the followers of the prophet Mohammed who at that time had recently conquered Palestine, and were in possession of Jerusalem.

The children started off bravely on their 300 mile march to the South coast of France but their ranks became more and more depleted as some of them strayed away from the main body and got lost; and some had to give up through sickness or accident. A third of the original number actually reached Marseilles a month later.

They had made no practical plans for further transport across the sea, but waited there patiently under a conviction that the waters of the Mediterranean would be cloven asunder to give them a passage on dry land. It was at this juncture that the merchants made their offer, which was eagerly grasped. But the children's hopes were never realised, as, instead of being landed on the shores of Palestine, they found themselves at the end of their voyage in the slave markets of Alexandria and Algiers. The merchants had played them false, and gained much from their sale as slaves.

Another gallant group of 30,000 German boys and girls set out in the same year from Cologne with the same purpose in view. Their leader was a peasant lad called Nicholas. After marching together for part of the way, they divided into two companies, and one party went to the port of Brindisi in Italy. There they set sail for Palestine, but were never heard of again. Only 5,000 of the rest reached Genoa, as some found the way too long and returned home. The fortune of these 5,000 was happier than that of the others, for the Senate of the City invited them to abandon their project and settle down there. This they did, and in time many became wealthy. Not a few rose to distinction and founded some of the noblest families in the State.

But think what a small proportion of the whole number this more fortunate little group were—only a tenth. Nine-tenths of these ardent young Crusaders perished in their pathetic attempt to show their love for their Lord and King. Their hearts grew hot as they thought of the Saviour's Cross in the hands of those who denied His atoning death, and who

challenged His right to be called the Son of God. What was the inspiration of the sacrifice of their lives?

Surely they tell us in the words of the hymn they sang as they sailed from Marseilles, all unknowingly, to their tragic fate—"Come Holy Ghost, our souls inspire." It is God the Holy Spirit Who alone can quicken our feeble desire to follow the Master even unto death. It is He alone Who can strengthen us sufficiently with power from on high that we may be enabled to meet the challenge of present-day Islam, and that we may proclaim fearlessly the Good News of the Cross, on which the Son of God died to save us all, Christians and Moslems alike.



Mosque on the Temple site at Jerusalem

It Broke in the Dark.

A story of Iran (Persia).

"Here we are at Bai-Yarz," said the driver.

The two passengers in the car, an Irani clergyman and a woman missionary doctor stepped out, and stretched their legs in relief after the hours of bumping over, what had seemed, an unending road across the desert. It was quite dark and all were hungry, ready for some of the little glasses of bitter-sweet tea that the tea-house man would bring.



"Where will you sit?"

"Why, here, by this little stream will be cool and refreshing." So rugs were spread, and the two passengers settled down to wait until tea and fried eggs on big slabs of bread should be brought from the tea-house.

"Salaam, Khanum — peace be with you, Lady!" Both jumped as the voice came out of the darkness, and spying the shrouded form of a woman across the stream, the doctor made the polite and expected rejoinder: "Peace be to you. Do join our meal."

"No, I have fed, thank you. I will wait until you are rested."

So the woman sat silent with the infinite patience of the East, until the two should have finished their meal, hurrying somewhat as they knew the visit meant a request to see a patient, and time was short. Sure enough . . .

"We heard that you were a woman doctor. Can you come and see a patient? There is no doctor here, only a government dresser. He has given the woman medicine but she is no better. Please come."

"I will come, but I am only passing through, and have no medicines with me."

"No matter. Come!"

So through the darkness, stethoscope in hand, stumbling over ruts and pot holes in the lane, the doctor went, wondering whither she was bound. At last they reached a doorway in a high wall, and upon knocking loudly, another shadowy figure, carrying a hurricane lantern, escorted them across a courtyard on to a wide, well carpeted verandah. There by lamplight, the doctor viewed her patient, who was lying on her floor bed, propped up by pillows and covered with an expensive padded quilt in spite of the hot night. Around her clustered a crowd of agitated women.

"How long has she been ill?"

Several voices answered simultaneously: "Three days." "No, a week." "It started ten days ago with a cold." "She's only been ill three days."

"How did it start? Has she had fever? Is she eating anything?"—so the questions went on, each one drawing a torrent of answers, out of which was pieced a fairly accurate picture of the course of the illness. Finally the doctor, kneeling on the floor, made her examination.

"What is the matter?" asked the mother.

"She has pneumonia," was the reply, giving the direct and definite answer, so beloved by the Irani in regard to illness. "On one side some fluid has collected. It should be removed, but I have no instruments here and I should need a syringe and needles. Can she be taken to Yezd?"

"Doctor, it is a hundred miles to Yezd. The dresser here has a syringe. He would lend it. Can you not do it?"

The doctor breathed a quick prayer for guidance as she weighed the pros and cons. She knew the risks. If she touched the girl and later she died, the whole village would say: "That Christian doctor killed her." On the other hand she wanted to help, even at that risk, so she said: "I will see if there is time."

So followed the return to the car—the request to the driver to delay an hour—messengers sent to the dresser, who awakened and dressed, brought his syringe and some alcohol to sterilize it. The doctor rummaged in her case and found eight precious sulphur tablets. She had bought them at two shillings each to take on the journey for just such an emergency.

Back on the verandah the girl's father and husband had come, to give permission for the needling.

"Would you bring some warm water and some soap, please . . . and take off her jacket . . . yes, all the clothes over her chest. No, she won't catch cold, it is very warm tonight."

Then there was quiet: just the splashing of water poured from a height as the doctor washed her hands in running water in Moslem fashion. Next the testing of the big syringe and the reassuring of the patient. "This will hurt you a little, but not very much."

So, all being prepared, a quick jab of the needle was made, seeking the little pocket of fluid that was pressing on the lung. "There it is!" came a cry from the watchers as a little clear fluid appeared in the syringe. Then — *crack* — felt by the doctor's finger, but heard by no one — the needle, buried to the hilt, broke.

For a second the doctor's heart stood still. Then, with a quick prayer for help, she withdrew the needle a fraction before it snapped right off, and slowly, gripping with her finger nails only, she pulled out the broken-off end. The doctor breathed again — never again would she use anyone else's instruments when doing a job! Nothing further could be done because the needle was broken.

While tea and fruit were being brought for the doctor's refreshment, she produced some tablets and gave instructions as to their use. The atmosphere of fear and hopelessness weighed upon the doctor's heart. How much these sad, though

wealthy, women, needed to know the love of Jesus! But time and opportunity would not allow more than a word, and she could only pray that her actions would speak of the love of Christ and prepare a way for the hearing of the Word which would surely follow in God's good time.

"You are a follower of Jesus? Yes, we know about that. Once a foreign doctor came here and treated the daughter of Hassan, and by what she did and the medicine she gave, she cured her. We saw what she did, and we know that the followers of Jesus are good people. Tell us more."

If an evangelist were to go to that village now a ready welcome would be given him.

* * *

There are many towns and villages in Iran whose people have felt the benefit of Christian medical care—sometimes travelling 200 miles to the Mission hospital for attention. But as yet there are no evangelists to follow with the Word. Are there none to offer? And what of the Mission hospitals which may have to be closed for lack of staff? Are there no doctors or nurses to offer? What better use could one make of one's life than thus to venture for God in Iran, Egypt, and other countries?

(Reprinted by kind courtesy of C.M.S.).

Ersa and Life in New China.

Knock! Knock! The missionary rapped at the door of the large Muslim compound where the Mission Hospital's ambulance was kept.

"Bow, wow, wow!" answered the aroused Tibetan dog tied just inside the door, as he hurled himself the full length of his heavy chain.

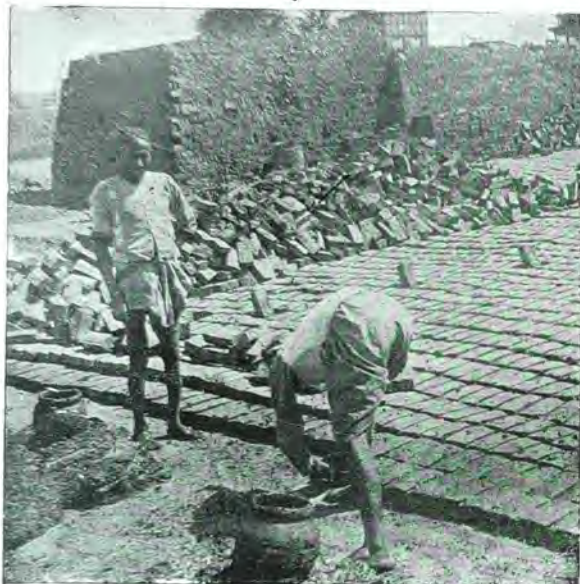
Rattle, rattle, went the chain as the lock was removed and the bar slid away to allow the opening of the two large heavy doors.

"Hello, Pastor!" greeted the smiling little thirteen-year-old son of Ma-Szu, the friendly Muslim who lived in this large compound.

"Hello yourself, Ersa" ("Jesus" in Muslim-Chinese) "excuse me for troubling you" apologised the missionary.

"No trouble Pastor," grinned Ersa, "are you going out in the gas-chariot (motor-ambulance) today?"

"No. I'm just doing a few repairs. What are you doing?"
"I'm hauling mud bricks with the donkey today. My father is building a new compound."



Mud Bricks.

"Is he working today?"

"Oh no, he is 'doing worship'. Don't you realise today is Friday, Worship-day?"

"To be sure, I had forgotten. Why is your father building a new compound? We will have to fix another place for our truck. Where is he building?"

"Right opposite the South gate in the West field beyond the moat. I am going there just now. Come along and I'll show it to you," invited Ersa, as he whacked the nearest donkey and started off.

"Why is your father moving, Ersa?" questioned the missionary, as they walked behind the loaded donkeys. Ersa's

face darkened as he replied: "They (the local Communist government) want the compound we are living in for themselves, and they have given us ten days time to get out."

"Ai-ya!" exclaimed the missionary, "ten days to build a compound! That isn't much time!"

"No help for it," muttered Ersa, as he directed the donkeys into the field where building operations were in evidence. A group of workmen building the outer compound wall were laughing and shouting as they shovelled earth into a frame and stamped it solid with their feet. In one corner of the partially completed compound carpenters were erecting a frame of barkless round logs for the living quarters. The mud bricks Ersa was hauling were being laid in place for the walls. Shavings from the carpenter's plane had been put into the mud bed and set afire to hasten the drying. A bright coloured cloth banner displaying Chinese characters (Chinese writing) hung from the new framework, invoking a blessing on the work. Steamers full of Chinese steamed breads (soft crusty buns) were stacked on a table in the yard in preparation for the workmen's lunch.

"Do you think you will have it finished in time, Ersa?" asked the missionary thoughtfully.

"We have to! No help for it!" answered Ersa with a gesture of futility.

Won't you pray that Ersa might truly come to know Jesus the Saviour. His family were so friendly to the missionary, and now, like many of the Muslims in China, they are passing through difficult and humiliating days.

H. Wagner (China Inland Mission).

Bedouin.

I wonder if you know what a Bedouin is? Well, a Bedouin is an Arab who has no settled home, but lives in a tent like the one in the picture; he is a wanderer in the desert, and moves about something like our gypsies do. Their tent serves for everything in the way of a house—it is bedroom and dining-room, sitting-room, work-room, and play-room, all in one. It is used as their poultry yard, pigeon house, and stables, in fact it is just one room used as a whole house!

Sometimes the Bedouin call their tent "Bait Shar" which means "a house of hair," because the tent-cloth is made by the women either of goats' or camels' hair. Their tents are not at all like the tents you use at the seaside, for yours are made of linen or canvas, and would not be any use at all to keep out the hot tropical sun or the heavy rain.



When the Bedouin are going to move house, or rather we ought to say move tent, they have very little to do; they do not need furniture vans, as we do, for they can easily pack up all they have in quite a short time. They generally have one gaily-painted wooden box. On some of these boxes you will find a huge peacock painted, or bunches or flowers in blue and red, green and yellow, and sometimes other pictures, with some of their names for God. This box has a very curious lock; you have to turn the key several times before it opens, and at each turn a little bell rings. I wonder if you can guess what this is for? It is to keep robbers from stealing, for you see a Bedouin tent has no door to lock to keep

thieves out. Now, into this wonderful and beautiful box they pack their few belongings; their nice things, such as their best clothes, and their boys' garments and any books they may have, but Bedouins have very few books indeed, for most of them can neither read nor write. When it is packed, this precious box is put on a camel's back, along with all their pots and pans, their tent and everything else they possess, and off they go!

Do you not think it is a nice easy way to live and move about? When the camel is going to have the things put on his back he has to kneel down, and often he does not like it at all and makes a very frightened noise; if they put on too many things and he thinks his load is too heavy he gives a loud angry grunt, and if he can get at anyone he will bite. Often camels who are cross and bad tempered have to be muzzled. I wonder how it would do to muzzle some cross people!



There are two kinds of Bedouin—the peaceful Bedouin, and the robber or fighting Bedouin. The peaceful ones settle down for quite a long time in one place. Sometimes they own thirty or forty date palms, and they keep one or two camels,

a few goats, a donkey, a sheep, and nearly always a half-wild dog, rather like a small Alsatian. When their dates are ripe they climb up the trees and gather them, to sell in the nearest market. Then from the outer fibre of the palm tree they make ropes and weave baskets, and from the palm leaves they make mats. Bedouin encampments are nearly always found just outside a town or village, near a well of water. They live a very simple life, and eat chiefly bread, dates, and vegetables of different kinds. They have very little furniture of any kind, and very few clothes. They generally bake twice a week, but it is not at all like our bread. It is made in round flat loaves, rather like a large crumpet, only they are not baked in the oven, but are just lightly browned over a smoky fire made of brushwood.

Now I think it would be rather nice to pay a visit to one of these tents, so will you come with me? Here is a nice large tent, with quite a number of women and children sitting outside. Look, one woman is making bread, that one is weaving, and there is another holding a poor little grubby, dirty baby. They are all squatting on the sandy ground. The men are away gathering dates, and the elder girls have gone to fetch water from the well, while the younger children are playing about the tent. Now we can see the bigger girls coming back; they are carrying huge jars of water on their heads, but look how graceful they are and how steadily they walk without spilling a single drop on the way.

We are standing right in front of the tent now, so we will wish them Good-day and ask how they are. See how pleased they are! What are they saying? "Do us the honour of coming in." So we will enter. "Fatma," says the elder lady, "fetch the mat and the bolster." They have no chairs, of course, you can see that for yourself, so we will sit down as comfortably as possible on the floor. Now watch them; they are going to make us a cup of black coffee, without any sugar in it. We must drink it of course, but instead of saying "Thank you" we must say very politely, "May you never want for coffee" and now they are answering immediately, "May your life be prolonged." How polite they are and how pleased they are to see us, but what a lot of questions they are asking. "What did your dresses cost?" "How old are you?" "Are you married?" and so many others, it is quite difficult to answer them all. Shall we ask them if they would like us to tell them

a story? Yes! they would love to hear a story! So we will tell them the story of "The Prodigal Son." They are listening so attentively, and now more women are beginning to come in from the other tents close by. We will try and teach them this little prayer now, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me, for Jesus Christ's sake." Shall we sing to them too, and teach them a little chorus? See how they enjoy it all; what a pity we cannot come more often and teach these poor dark hearts.

But listen, here come the men, and we must go now. We will wish them Peace. Hark! they are begging us to come again soon, but alas! there are so many tents, and so few missionaries to visit them all.

I wonder, dear reader, if you have asked God to give **you** a clean heart, and I wonder if **you** are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ? If you are, will you pray for these tent dwellers, that they might become like the great Bedouin of the Old Testament, Abraham, who was called "the friend of God."

Hassan and the Bees *(Part 2)*

The day's work was done, and as the missionary came through the compound gates, returning from a visit to a neighbouring village, he saw Hassan sitting cross-legged on the ground, looking up, with a big grin, at the night-watchman who had just come on duty.

"What's the joke, Hassan?" his friend asked.

"Nothing. I was just thinking of the bees."

Now anything more unlike a delicate bee than our ex-gaol-bird night-watchman would be difficult to imagine, and the watchman himself didn't know, judging by his puzzled expression, whether to be angry or pleased.

"You don't think Mohammed looks like a bee, do you?" Hassan laughed, "No fear! But I was wondering if the bees have a night-watchman in the hives. They seem to have everything there."

"Well, yes, they have. It's not light enough now for us to see much, but I want to attend to some more of the hives tomorrow morning. So after prayers, get your 'face' and come down to the hives and I'll show you what a 'Mohammed bee' looks like."

Next morning after prayers, Hassan came along to the hives wearing his "face", which you remember, was a gauze veil to keep the bees from attacking him. Before they puffed some smoke into the hive entrance, they stood just at the side of the hive together. "Now look," said the Missionary, "See those bees standing just outside the hive entrance? They are the sentries of the hive. Now watch! See those bees coming in with their legs all covered with pollen? Look! There are the sentry-bees challenging them. Every bee that comes in is challenged. If he 'belongs', he is allowed to go in. If he doesn't, he is kept out."

"But how do the sentries know if he belongs? All the bees look alike to me."

"They tell by the smell. Every hive has a special smell of its own. We can't smell it or tell the difference from any other hive, but the bees can, and every bee in the hive has the same smell."

"But what happens if a whole lot of strange bees try to get in at once? Wouldn't they be able to beat the sentries?"

"Well, of course that does happen sometimes, but usually only if the hive is a weak one and has a lot of honey in it. Then robber-bees come along from other hives to try and rob it. When that happens there is always a fierce fight and many bees on both sides are killed."

"It would be funny if people could tell what family or religion they belonged to, by the smell, wouldn't it?" Hassan asked wickedly, for some Egyptians think that foreigners have a different smell from them, even as many foreigners of course think that of them!

"As a matter of fact, Hassan, now that you mention it, the Bible does say that Christian people should be a fragrance of Christ. That means that their lives should be sweet and lovely like His, so that just as the watchman-bee recognises the smell of the bees of the hive, so when people see the lovely life of a Christian, they can say, 'Why, his life is just like his Master's.'"

“That Bible of yours is a wonderful book” said Hassan. “It seems to have something to say about everything. Does it say anything about people who don’t belong to Christ, trying to push in like the robber-bees?”

“Yes, it has something to say about that too, Hassan, for we are told of people who push into Christ’s Church—which is like the hive—who don’t belong, and when they do, they make trouble, just like the robber-bees. But now, let’s have a look inside this hive. I’m not very happy about the way the bees are behaving. I think there’s something wrong.”

As the lid was lifted off, Hassan, remembering his last experience, stood at a respectable distance with his hands pushed right down into his pockets. “Ha, just as I feared,” the Missionary exclaimed, after examining a few frames. “It seems that there is no queen in this hive.”

“How can you tell?” queried Hassan. “She may be hidden somewhere amongst all those thousands of bees.”

“No, I don’t think so, though she may, of course. Do you remember how nice and even all the cells were in the last hive at which we looked? There were hundreds of capped cells all together and groups of cells with grubs in—you know, the baby bees, before they are bees—and others with eggs in; but all neatly in groups. Now these frames are different. See, all the cells are drone cells—the bigger ones you remember, that stick out from the comb, like this—there are no worker-cells at all, and there are empty cells all over the place. See these cells with three or four or more eggs in each? Well, no queen bee lays her eggs like that. What all this says is that most probably the queen is dead or has left the hive, and a laying worker is doing her job, or trying to.”

“A laying worker? What do you mean? I thought only the queen laid eggs?”

“Yes, that is so, but when there is no queen, and no eggs from which to make a queen, sometimes one of the workers starts to lay eggs. But she can only lay drone eggs, and drones don’t do anything but eat honey; they don’t produce it. Laying eggs really isn’t her job, either, so she doesn’t do it very evenly or properly, and that’s one of the ways we can tell if there is a laying worker in the hive.”

“But doesn’t that mean that soon there won’t be any bees but drones in the hive? What happens then?”

“Yes, that’s exactly what it does mean, and what happens is that the hive dies out. You see, a worker-bee only lives a very few weeks in the Summer time—she wears herself out with work—so in about six weeks’ time there will be no workers left there unless we do something about it. Oh yes, something can be done, and we’ll do it.”

“You know,” Hassan said thoughtfully, “You were saying that a hive is something like a Church. Do you ever get Churches like that hive, with nothing but drones in them, and do they die out then?”

“Yes, Hassan, unfortunately we do, and do you know that here in Egypt we have a Church something like that. Listen! We’ll just close up this hive again and I’ll tell you.”

“Many years ago the Coptic Church in Egypt was as busy as a bee-hive. Yes, and it shed a fragrance to other countries round about. There were some wonderful men in that Church as its leaders, and I wouldn’t be surprised if the forefathers of us Englishmen, who have come to your country with the Gospel, didn’t owe a lot of what they know about the Lord Jesus Christ, to the Christians in Egypt.”

“That must have been a long time ago,” interrupted Hassan, “The Copts don’t seem to know very much about the Lord Jesus now.”

“Yes, it was a long time ago, and I’ll tell you what happened. Once the leaders were like the Queen Bee we talked about yesterday. You remember what we said about the Royal Blood of Jesus making an ordinary person into a Child of God, and how necessary it was to feed on the royal jelly of God’s book, and then instead of being like the Queen Bee, they became just like the laying workers? Oh yes, some of them worked hard all right, but that didn’t alter the fact that they were just like everybody else. Soon, of course, all the people in the Church became like the drones in the hive, and very soon the Church began to die out, and today it is nearly dead.”

“Yes, it is that,” agreed Hassan, “But must it always be dead?”

“Oh no! Tomorrow I am going to get rid of the laying workers in that hive and give them a new queen. Then they’ll be able to live again. What the Coptic Church needs today is new life, and when that comes the Church will live again.”

“God willing, that will be soon,” said Hassan fervently.

“Amen!” said the Missionary.

* * *

Reader, can you find references in the Bible about Christians’ lives being the fragrance of Christ? About others coming into the Church and spoiling it? About dead Churches?

Books 1

How many books can you read at one time? There is a story which a certain mother tells about her daughter Heather. This thirteen-year-old was late for breakfast and so her mother went up to the bedroom to find out the reason. She found Heather with her hair still unbrushed, though the brush was in her hand, for she was bending over the dressing table reading a book. On looking round the room her mother found that there was another book on the wash stand, a third on the chest of drawers, and a fourth lying on the bed! She collected the books, and just as a matter of interest, began to ask Heather questions concerning the contents, thinking that she could not possibly be keeping in her mind the details of each; but Heather passed the examination with flying colours!

Please do not copy this habit of Heather’s to such an extent, as you may get into trouble at home. But it might be a good thing to do a bit of stocktaking as to how many books you have read lately which have been of help to you in widening your missionary interest. You may say that you have no opportunity to get hold of any. Here is some good news!

The Fellowship of Faith for the Moslems has an extremely good library full of most interesting and readable books. The Secretary has very kindly offered to allow any reader of "Challenge" to borrow these books (postage only charged), so from now on we shall be giving you a few suggestions in each copy of the "Challenge." If none of these names seem of interest to you do please write to the Librarian, Miss O. Botham, 53 Poets Road, London, N.5., and she will send you a further list. I do hope you will take advantage of this exceptional offer. When you write for a book please be sure to mention that you are applying as a reader of the "Challenge," as the books are not available to the ordinary public.

No.

- 108 "An Heroic Bishop" (The life story of French of Lahore) by Eugene Stock. (For boys especially).
- 259 "A Merry Mountaineer" — Clifford Harris of Persia. By R. W. Howard.
- 274 "A Doctor carries on" — Dr. Lambie in Ethiopia and Palestine.
- 162 "Thamillah, the Turtledove" — a story of a Kabyle girl's life.
- 326 "Almond Blossom" by Violet E. Young.

For younger readers.

- 93 "Topsy-Turvey Land" — Arabia in Pictures and Story. By Dr. and Mrs. Zwemer.
- 94 "Zig-zag Journeys in the Camel Country."
- 95 "Children of Egypt" by L. Crowther.