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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

FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH FOR THE MOSLEMS

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The Stream and the Source.

A girl-orphan named Shereefa was taken from her village up to the hill country to be married to a peasant, and the old woman who took her there stayed the three days, and then left her. The new home, though only a miserable hut, was yet pleasant owing to the birds singing all around it and the sun shining above it and the fig-tree flowering in the garden, for it was now summer.

Before the summer was finished, she grew anxious and weary, for her mother-in-law was always ill, and her disease caused her to become fractious, and so no one came to visit her. Then the poor girl's husband went off to the grape-harvest, and ordered her not to go out at all, so she was unable to go to the bath, or to the saint's tomb, or even to the cemetery on Fridays to get relief from her cares. In addition to all this, Ramadan fell in the late summer that year, so that the fast days were very long and hot, and no one came to spend the evening with them.

As Shereefa knew that her husband would return home for Lailat-el-Qadr* she told herself that she would ask him to let her go to visit some of the friends on the day of "Eed-es-Sagheer" (Little Feast). So she prepared him a nice supper to make his heart glad, and then, when she saw his face shining, she ventured to ask him her request. He considered for a time, and then said, "Truly you have been alone the whole summer and did not cry too much; well, I will go and see Aly Ben Sayed at the cafe tonight, and as his house is opposite us, he may perhaps tell his family to take you with them." She was glad to hear this, for she remembered that she had seen Haneefa, the wife of Aly, and had been to her wedding, and that she resembled her own mother's face.

* The Night of Destiny, in last week of Ramadan.

When her husband arose and went out the next morning, she opened her box of clothes which she had carried away from her wedding, although it is true they were not very many for her dowry was only ten dollars. As soon as she saw them, her joy was turned into sadness, for the box had been an old one, and so the dust had penetrated into it the whole summer, and spoilt her clothes without her knowing anything about it.

However she soothed herself with the thought that there were still left three days in which to wash her things at the stream in the garden and she would do that the next day so as to be ready on the third day.

The wind, however, blew strongly that afternoon and the hut shook all night, and then when the wind ceased in the morning, the rain came down unceasingly all that night along with thunder and lightning, so that her heart fainted and her brain worried over her washing.

When she arose from sleep the third day, that is the day of the Feast, she found the sun shining and the birds singing, so she took her bundle of clothes and went to the stream to wash. The water was not, however, like the



town water, for the rain had stirred up the mud of the ditch and made it all slimy. Still she washed as hard as she could hoping to get them clean at last, but she really made matters

worse, for the clay of the ditch got over the clothes and spoilt them. She then in despair sat down and cried until she could cry no longer, for she would now have to sit indoors like a prisoner, hearing nothing and seeing no one but her husband and her mother-in-law, of both of whom she was quite tired.

While she was sitting crying thus she heard the voices of women going along the road to the village, and this diverted her thoughts and she mounted up on the cactus hedge. There she saw Haneefa, the wife of Aly, and her daughter, carrying their bundles of clothes on their heads.



As they had not yet seen her, she clapped her hands to them. When Haneefa turned, Shareefa called to her to come, and when she walked along the narrow path to the hut, she asked her, "Why are you crying, my daughter? You know that you are coming with me tomorrow to see the world." Shereefa answered her, "That is the reason of my crying, for my clothes are dirty and I cannot get them clean, so how can I come with you and shame myself before people?"

Haneefa said: "You are excused my girl, for you are a town-child, and do not know the country; such as you wash in the stream during the time of rain; do you not know that the spring is here behind that olive tree?" She said, "No, I know nothing about it at all, I am only a little wild animal, how should I know things with no one to teach me?"

Haneefa replied: "Look at the clothes which I have just washed, they are as white as milk, and now I will spread them in the sun to dry. There is yet time, and the sun is still strong, run and ask your mother-in-law to let you return with me to the spring."

Shereefa went and asked the old woman but she turned her face to her matting and said: "That's your business, if your husband comes home and finds you not here, you will get a beating with a stick, so please yourself."

She came away and went with Haneefa, and when they drew near the spring there were lots of women coming and going, those coming up bore bundles of dirty clothes, and those going down had nothing but clean ones. When she looked at the spring she saw why it cleansed away all the dirt-stains, for it came out from a rock and ran as clear crystal. When she soaked her clothes in it, it cleansed away every dirt-mark and all those the muddy ditch had made. With all joy she spread them in the sun and found that that increased the whiteness.

On the day of the Feast, she went along with a heart that nearly leaped for joy, and thought that she had never seen a feast like it, for the days of her loneliness had gone like a dream.

The Interpretation (Abridged).

You know, O sister, that you also, the same as Shereefa, have many days of weariness and loneliness, and your thoughts go upward to heaven as hers did to the coming feast, and perhaps you long for it, and you know it is all purity and so you try to purify yourself now in preparation for it, and you strive to cleanse yourself, not your clothes but your spirit, by doing good works . . . hoping that they will be able to remove your burdens. These good deeds are, however, mixed with worldliness just as the water of the stream was mixed with mud and so they cannot take away your sin . . .

Listen, O sister, . . . for we followers of the Messiah have come near to you just as Haneefa did to Shereefa's garden, and we are able to tell you about a spring of water as clear as crystal; this spring has already washed our sins and filthiness and is able to take away your dirtiness.

This spring is Jesus Christ, our Lord—descended from heaven pure as the stars, nor was there in Him any trace of sin, and therefore when he died for us, he was able to bear our sins. Come unto Him and let Him do the work for you; then on Feast-Day, the great day of Heaven, you will awake quite free and happy. Amen.

From Parables by the late MISS L. TROTTER,
(Algiers Mission Band).

Pink-Knees in Palestine.

After the Unit I was with had moved out of Cairo to the Suez Canal Area, we began to have work coming in from Palestine, and before long it became necessary for teams to go up there for short periods. The Colonel knew how keen I was to get up there, but somehow I was always out somewhere else when the chance came. One quite large team left in June 1947 for Jerusalem, leaving me still in Suez, but soon after their arrival they found they needed another Officer, and that was my opportunity. At last the pinky shade of my knees was deepening, and soon I should be able to "swing the lamp." This is really a sailor's expression, for when they tell their sea stories the weather is usually very stormy, and the swinging lamp is meant to represent the ship getting tossed about.

So just before sunset one evening, about the middle of June, a truck took me into the town of Ismailia. There was plenty of time before the night train left, so I had something to eat, and walked to the Railway Station by 9 p.m. The platform, even at that time, was quite a jumble of bamboo crates, heaps of luggage, and little groups of people sitting quietly on their haunches waiting for the train. One or two porters in long blue robes with brass identification plates, were carting boxes over the footbridge on to the "Up" platform. A small boy came wandering around selling books and magazines. In a dark corner, under the shelter, three little children were snuggling down under a kind of carpet, getting ready for their night's sleep. I was glad, for their sakes, that it was a mild night.

At 9.30 p.m. the train steamed in, and much sooner than I had really expected, we were off, bound for Lydda. We stopped at Kantara, on the Eastern side of the Suez Canal, for a meal, and to get our money changed into Palestinian currency. Then we set off across the desert. Even though the seat was rather hard, it was not long before I dozed off, and woke up to find we were drawing up at Gaza, well within Palestine, for breakfast.

Although there was still a good deal of sand about, the scenery was not that of the real desert. Already the groves of Orange trees were appearing, and the country was beginning to look more cared for. By the time we reached Lydda cultivation was well advanced. That was as far as the train went, because the line to Haifa was blocked, and that to Jerusalem had been out of action for some time. We clambered out and waited for the lorries to take us to Jerusalem 25 miles away. At last they came and we set off up one of the valleys we read about in the Old Testament (Joshua 10.12).

The old name for Lydda is Lod, which we read of in the Bible, and it lies on the low Coastal plain of Palestine. Jerusalem, of course, is up in the mountains, so to reach it we had to go up the Valley of Ajalon. This is a steep valley, quite narrow and with great rocky crags sticking through the sides of the hills. There are quite a lot of trees, many of them planted fairly recently, and this helps to take away some of the barren appearance, but the fields and groves of the plain were soon left behind.

At last the towers of Jerusalem came into sight, and there was the City itself. I was to stay in an old orphanage that the Army had taken over, and before long I had joined the others and settled down to work. Busy I might be, but at least I was in Jerusalem.

On the first Saturday afternoon after I arrived, the Padre arranged a trip to the Dead Sea and Jericho. We set out in trucks, and made our way down through the centre of Jerusalem, past the big concrete blocks of offices and flats, to the huge Y.M.C.A. building made like a sky-scraper. We turned sharply to the left at the cross-roads, and found ourselves travelling along by the old City Wall. Though the walls we saw were not the actual ones built by Nehemiah five hundred years before the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, they made a very sharp contrast with the modern buildings of the newer part of the City. On the right we passed the Damascus Gate, probably built on the site of the Gate by which Saul of Tarsus left Jerusalem on that momentous journey he made to Damascus, during which he saw the Lord Jesus Christ. Further on we could see, at times, the Dome of the great Moslem Mosque that has been built on the place where the old Jewish Temple used to stand before it was destroyed by the Romans.

On the other side of the road lay the Garden of Gethsemane where Christ was praying to His Father, when the soldiers took Him away to be tried before Pilate. Now it is a shady little plot with many trees surrounding the two chapels, one The Church of All Nations, built with gifts from very many countries; the other, a Russian Chapel, set a little farther up the lower slope of the Mount of Olives.

Soon we were climbing steadily and turning Eastward round the shoulder of the Mount of Olives. When we were round the other side we stopped for a quick glimpse of Bethany, where Martha, Mary and Lazarus used to live, and where the Lord Jesus sometimes lodged. Then we began the winding descent down the steep hillside on to the road to Jericho. The countryside had become very barren again, and before us stretched only steep, stony hills, covered in patches, with thorny, leafless bushes almost the same colour as the parched ground itself. We stopped for a few minutes by a Hostel half-way along the road, and being taken round the back of the present building, we were shewn the rough outline of an Inn that was supposed to have been the only one on that lonely road at the time when Jesus walked it. The Padre read to us the story the Lord Jesus Christ told, of the Good Samaritan bringing the wounded man to an Inn.



Next, we passed a sign written in Arabic, Hebrew and English saying we were at Sea Level, then we kept on going down into the hot, stuffy air of the Jordan Valley. Then

suddenly, before us stretched the Dead Sea, calm and deserted, as lifeless as the barren hills that surround it. Across its shimmering surface the Hills of Moab stood out dry, stony and uninviting.

After refreshments, the trucks conveyed us to the site of the old City of Jericho which is some distance from the present town, and well away from the River Jordan. Old Jericho is now just a big heap of earth and stones, not at all imposing. Climbing up on this mound we were able to pick out walls and the shape of rooms amidst all the rubbish. A glance Eastward from the top of the heap showed one the result of fresh water coming into that hot, fertile Jordan Valley; the bright green of the groves, the tufty palm trees, and the fruitful fields were very different from the dreary hills through which we had come.

Wanting to be back at Jerusalem before it was dark, we could not stay long at Jericho and soon we were wending our way up that road that goes down from Jerusalem to Jericho.

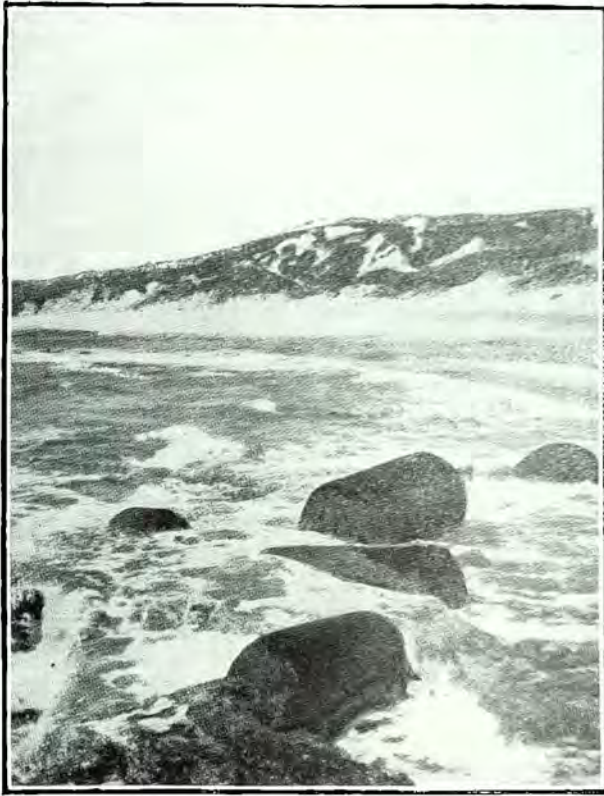
It had been a full and interesting trip, and it enabled us to put ourselves more clearly into the Bible Stories we read. As we came up the winding road the memory that the Lord Jesus Christ had walked it steadfastly, though He knew that the Cross awaited Him at the end of the journey, made us quiet and rather subdued.

ALAN EAST.
(All Nations Bible College).

**“Behold, I have set before thee an
open door”—**

“Go ye, therefore.”

Just North of the Palestine border (now divided into Israel and Jordan) lies the ancient city of Tyre. Once a great seaport whence the Phoenicians came to Britain with their dyes and wares to trade, once the “mart of nations,” now she lies desolate as the prophet Ezekiel foretold “a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea.” Even the most casual visitor can see for himself how literally God’s Word has been fulfilled as he stands on the top of the rocks and sees parts of the ancient pillars lying in the sea and the excavated remains of a Roman arena and temple.



To this very town the Saviour Himself came when he healed the Syrophenician woman's daughter, and many from the coast of Tyre and Sidon "came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases." Can it be that Tyre is now a Moslem town? Yes, very largely, and not only Tyre but over 200 villages in the district around where homes and hearts are dark indeed and crime abounds.

Come with me through the narrow, winding streets with their open sewers filled with refuse and flies, past shuttered windows to the British Syrian Mission compound. For 80 years this house with its school and little Church nearby

has stood as a centre of light in a dark place. Every morning 120 children gather in the school and after prayers the first lesson is always Scripture. Many boys and girls have learnt not only to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour but to walk with Him. A little girl whose father was sick recently said to him: "Father, I want to pray for you." "Pray, my child," said the Father. "No, not here," came the reply. "I will pray at School in the Prayer Hall." The family were astonished. The child felt that in the Christian School real prayers were offered to God and answered by Him. The Moslem atmosphere of her home did not satisfy her young heart, nor the set and formal prayers repeated by her relations at certain times of the day.

So through many a schoolchild an entrance is found for the Gospel messengers into the homes of Tyre. The Saviour has indeed returned there in the person of His servants and as a result of their witness over many years there is now an open door into every home. "Behold I have set before thee an open door": "Go ye, therefore."

Come with me for a day up into one of the mountain villages, all of which are open to the Gospel. We took the road up past the tomb of Hiram, King of Tyre, and after passing many an Arab refugee colony reached Kana. What a welcome awaited us. Immediately we entered a house and the evangelist got out her picture book to tell the old, old story, neighbours crowded in to hear and to invite us to their homes. As I sat listening I could see out through the open door and found myself fascinated by the sight that met my eyes. A crowd of young boys were slowly creeping up the hill one by one, their faces alight with eagerness, until they filled the doorway and remained listening with rapt attention.

Hark! the voice of Jesus crying:
"Who will go and work to-day?"
Fields are white and harvest waiting,
Who will bear the sheaves away?
Loud and strong the Master calleth,
Rich reward He offers thee;
Who will answer, gladly saying,
"Here am I, send me, send me"?"

ELSA M. THOMSON, B.S.M.

An Arab girl's testimony to Christ.

(Written at her own dictation)

"When I was a little girl I had never heard of Jesus, neither had my father or mother. Then came the time when I used to join the children who were playing outside the Mission House while waiting to go in for their class and to hear the Word of God. I said to myself, "They will not allow me to go in, but I can play with the children outside." I was glad when I found that they would let me go in too. Every day I used to come and hear the Word of God and I used to listen well but I understood nothing. I used to answer all the questions and say "yes" or "no," but I did not understand what it was all about. For several years I came thus with no understanding until one day I was playing outside and I quarrelled with another little girl who ran away. I said to myself, "When I catch you next time I will strike you!" Then the door opened to me and I went into the big court of the house and found that they were having a meeting for women. I said, "Oh, I would so like to go in and see what they are doing," but the missionary said, "No, the meeting is only for grown-up people, but you can play in the court." I was so eager to get in that I said to one of the women, "I will give you two sous (all I had) if you will let me come in!" However, I had to remain in the court and sat among the shoes at the door amusing myself by arranging them in pairs and at the same time listening to what was being said to the women in the inner room. When they began to drink coffee I was rather ashamed for I said to myself, "They will think I have come hoping to have coffee offered to me." After the coffee was finished I listened to what the missionary was saying and I heard her say, "God says we must be loving even as Christ loved us and gave Himself for us." When I heard those words I was ashamed and said to myself, "I will not strike that girl with whom I have quarrelled," and from that time I stopped fighting with other children.

Then came the big Fast of Ramadan and because I was kept at home to help my mother, I was unable to come in the mornings to the Mission House to "read," but I came instead to the afternoon meetings where things were explained

more fully and little by little I began to understand. I understood that I must not be jealous when I saw other children with prettier dresses than I had. In the past, anger used to fill my heart when I quarrelled with anyone, now I find anger goes away at once and I can be glad. Now I have given all of myself to Christ and I await His coming with joy.



Last night I was thinking what a joy it is to me when the missionary comes to see me in my own home, how I run to spread a carpet for her to sit upon and hasten to make the coffee for her for she is my friend and I love her and she loves me. And because I know I have done nothing to grieve her I am not frightened of her and do not wish to hide myself from her. She knows me and I know her and we are happy together. So shall I do for Christ when He comes. How glad I am when the time draws near for the return of my missionary friend from her own country, for she tells me of the wonders and beauties of her country and of the journey. So will Christ tell me about the wonders and beauties of Heaven.

The time came when I was old enough to keep the Fast, but I wished to break the Fast for Christ's sake. I began to see that we only changed the hours of eating from day to night and did not really fast at all as Christ did. My father was dead by then, but my uncle said, "You must keep the Fast and if you do not I will kill you." I was very sad and cried.

The Missionary said I could not fast at the Mission house so that night I went home and all night I kept crying to God. In the morning I said to my mother, "I cannot fast. I am a Christian." She said to me, "Very well, my daughter, you may do as your heart tells you." My uncle said, "You must fast," but he did not do anything more than that so I went back to the Mission house with joy in my heart and from that time I have not fasted."



The Bible and Islam.

No. 6 "PREDESTINATION OF GOOD AND EVIL"

One day in North Africa some young Muslim students asked me, "Is God Almighty?" "Yes," I said. "Then if I steal or commit adultery, He could stop me?" "Yes," I said. "And yet He hasn't done so?" "No," I agreed. "Well then," say they, "we steal and commit adultery in the Name of 'bism Allah'."

There you have the Muslim philosophy of predestination. God is Almighty; they say, He doesn't stop sin, therefore He is author of it. 'All is written,' a cast-iron fatalism covers everything; and so there is no freedom of choice, no sense of guilt.

But when we come to God's revelation in the Bible, we touch some of the profoundest truths ever revealed to man.

First of all the God of the Bible, the living God, unlike Allah, **is holy**. Read of Adam's expulsion from the Garden (Gen. 3), of Isaiah's shame in the Temple (Isa. 6), of Peter's confession of sinfulness (Luke 5.8), and we realise something of God's awful Holiness.

Secondly we learn of man's freedom of choice. He is not fated to sin for ever, witness all the pleading of the prophets for man to choose aright. Deut. 30.19, Isa. 55.37, Ezek. 18.31, 32.

Now we believe two truths, not a compromise between them—that (1) God is sovereign and (2) that man has freedom of moral choice and so we come to this: that God can foresee from the beginning all man's choice and predestine the final issue, without altering the guilt or innocence of the human agent. This is not easy for the finite mind to grasp, but two **apparent** contradictions are **both** true. We see this in words full of destiny uttered by Peter on the Day of Pentecost: "Him being delivered by the **determinate counsel** and **foreknowledge** of God, ye . . . by **wicked hands** have crucified," Acts 2, and again "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. 13.8.

There we have God's predestination and man's guilt both revealed. No one is predestined to do evil, and if man does evil, he is guilty and liable to punishment—"wicked hands." At the same time God uses even Satan's evil for deeper over-ruling than any have dreamed that He may further His own sovereign invincible plans of bringing in everlasting righteousness. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."

God who hates man's sin can use it for His own glory.

How infinitely more glorious is the Christian philosophy than the Satanic Muhammedan delusion with its robot fatalism, its lack of guilt and lack of blood redemption.

F.A.R.



Hassan and the Bees.

Hassan was out of breath and excited. "Come quickly," he gasped, "All the bees have got out and flown away!"

"All the bees?" the Missionary asked.

"Well, millions of them, anyway."

"Where did they fly, Hassan?"

Hassan pointed over the wall. We went down to the spot together. As we passed the hives there was still plenty of normal activity about all of them except one, and that was showing signs of a recent swarm.

"Still plenty of bees about, Hassan."

"Umm! I thought they'd all gone, there were so many," he replied. "Why have they only left one hive and stayed in all the rest?"

"I'll tell you about that in a minute, but let's recapture this swarm first. No, you needn't be afraid. They won't sting this time. You just hold that box there, under the bunch of bees, whilst I shake them into it. That's right! There goes the Queen with them too! Now we are all right again and we have another hive."

After the bees had been safely housed in a new hive the Missionary called to Hassan, "Get that 'face' from the garage and come with me. We'll have a look at the hives together and see what we can learn." Hassan grinned and ran off, presently reappearing with the 'face'—a gauze veil to keep the bees from stinging him. He felt a little safer with that on, but still he kept his hands in his pockets. He was taking no risks. He had been stung before and knew what it felt like. He watched as a little smoke was puffed into a hive, then he helped to take the lid off. The scene that met his eyes there frightened him at first; he had not realised there were so many bees in a hive before. No wonder there were still a lot left even after a big crowd had flown away. He

became so fascinated as his friend took out some frames with all the bees clinging to them, that he forgot to keep his hands in his pockets. He put out his hand to take hold of a frame too; then becoming frightened as he was about to lift it, he suddenly pulled it away. Instantly there was a flash of bees' wings in the sun, and a howl from Hassan. The sting was extracted and Hassan was told that the bee had only stung him because he had frightened her when he moved his hand so quickly. "Always move slowly and deliberately with bees, Hassan," he was cautioned. But Hassan didn't move his hand from his pocket any more. He had decided that no movement at all was the safest with things of uncertain temperament like bees. Still, they were fascinating, those bees. How did all those thousands of them know what to do—or didn't they?

"Oh yes, Hassan, they all know their jobs and they all get on with them without any fuss. I'll tell you a little about them as we work, if you listen. You see those little bees running around poking their heads in those little cells with the white spot on the bottom of them? Well, they are nursemaid bees, and those little white spots are babies that they are feeding. They mix up the food from honey and pollen in just the right proportion and know just how much to give them, and for how long. In exactly nine days from the time they start feeding them, they will put lids on these cells and seal them down until the babies come out as bees. See all those other bees hanging together? They are builders. Just now they are manufacturing wax from the honey and when they have manufactured some tiny, thin sheets of wax, they will build the walls of the cells with them. They always make those cells exactly the same size and shape too for each particular kind of "house." Yes, there are several kinds of "house." There are some for the worker-bees to be born and grow in, some for drones—they are those bigger ones, see?—some for storing honey—they usually slope a bit more so that the honey won't fall out—some for the Queens to be born and grow in. They are special ones. See here are some, like acorns! I'm going to cut them off, though, because I don't want any more Queens in this hive. No, there is only one Queen in the hive. She lays all the eggs. She lays about 2,000 a day and she can make them come out drones or workers, just as she will. No, she doesn't lay Queens, they are not born, but made. Who makes them? Well, I suppose

it's the worker-bees really. It's all a matter of feeding and bringing-up. Any of these tiny eggs you see like little pieces of cotton at the bottom of the cells, can become either a Queen or a worker. If the worker-bees feed the little grub that will hatch in a day or two, with special food called royal jelly—that's what we call it of course; the bees, I guess, have another name, if they bother with names—and build a Queen cell around it, it will become a Queen in less than three weeks. If they just give it ordinary food, it will just be an ordinary worker. After all, they are not much different from human beings in that respect, are they? If Kings and Queens were born in ordinary homes and brought up in an ordinary way, they'd just be ordinary people, and if an ordinary person like you or me, were born in a Palace and brought up as a child of the King, why he might some day be a King too."

"But that's not what I was taught as a Moslem," Hassan interrupted, "We were taught that Allah wills that some people should be rich and some poor, just as he wills that some should go to heaven and some to hell."

"Well, maybe that's what a Moslem believes, Hassan, but it is not what the Bible teaches us. We are all born sons of Adam—all alike, just like these little eggs—but we may become sons of God, Kings and Priests, so the Bible tells us. It isn't royal jelly that makes the difference though, but royal blood. No, you're wrong. I'm not thinking of people who say they have royal blood in their veins. I'm thinking of the blood of Jesus, Who is Kings of Kings, which He shed on the Cross to save us from our sins. You know what I mean, of course, I've told you the story so often." Hassan nodded.

"There is something too that we might call royal jelly—royal food—and that's God's Word, the Bible, which is the food that God provides for His royal children's growth. The Queen bee doesn't just eat royal food until she becomes a Queen, she's specially fed all her life. We can learn a lot from bees, can't we?"

Readers, can you find any verses in the Bible that tell us that sons of Adam can be sons of God—sons of the King—and others which speak of the Bible as food?

A. WHITEHOUSE (E.G.M.).

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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.

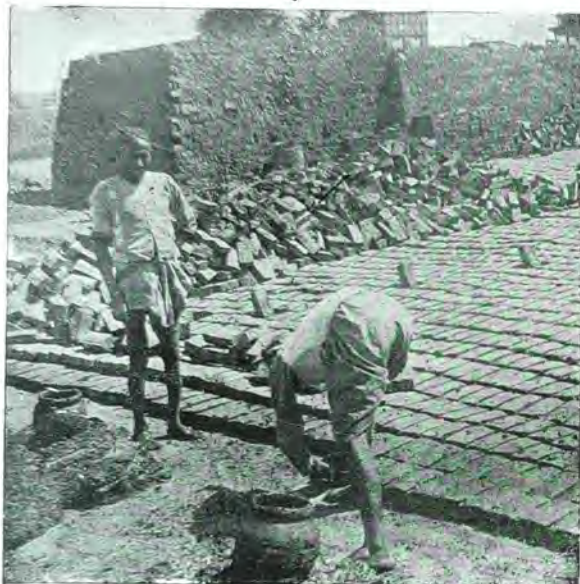
Rattle, rattle, went the chain as the lock was removed and the bar slid away to allow the opening of the two large heavy doors.

"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 of 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.

Challenge
and
Counter
Challenge

A stylized illustration of a green figure holding a white flag with a red cross. The figure is positioned in the center, with its arms raised to hold the flag. The flag is white with a prominent red cross. The background consists of two thick black diagonal lines that intersect at the top and bottom, creating a sense of depth and movement. The text 'Challenge and Counter Challenge' is written in a green, cursive font, with 'Challenge' at the top, 'and' in the middle, and 'Counter Challenge' at the bottom.

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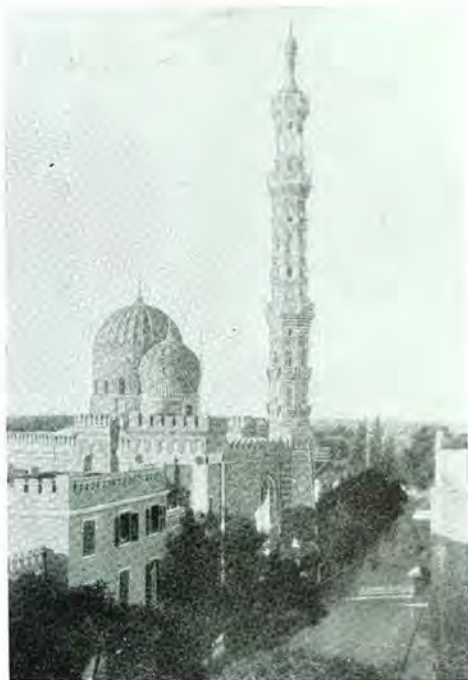
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The Muezzin

This is a peculiar word isn't it? First, let me tell you how to pronounce it. It has three parts, *Moo- ez- zin*, and you must emphasize the middle one. It means "one who calls to prayer."



"The tall minaret" at Damanhour, in Egypt.

If you lived in a Muslim country you would be wakened very early each morning, when the first ray of light appeared in the sky, by the sound of the Muezzin's voice from the mosque nearby. First of all he has to wash himself thoroughly all over; this is a religious duty. Then he mounts the circular staircase inside the tall minaret, and on reaching the top, comes out

through a little door on to a balcony which encircles the minaret. After placing his thumbs on the lobes of his ears, and cupping his hands around his mouth, he takes a deep breath, and with all the strength he can muster, calls the slumbering world to awake. "God is most great!" he cries, "Come to prayer! Prayer is better than sleep!" Then one hears the patter of feet as the menfolk make their way to the mosque to say prayers.

But I am sorry to tell you that they don't talk to God as we do, but just say the same words each day. And it is only the men who may enter the mosque; many Muslims think that women have no souls and that there is no life for them after death, so the women are not allowed to join in the prayers. Of course we who read the Bible know that this is not true, for we read "God so loved *the world*" and that includes both men and women!

At mid-day, mid-afternoon, at sunset, and when night is drawing nigh, the Muezzin again calls men to pray to "Allah"—the Muslim name for God. Five times a day, therefore, from thousands of mosques this call goes forth, in distant China, India, Turkestan, Afghanistan, Persia, Syria, along the North African Coast, Egypt, the Sudan and around the shores of Africa.

"God is great!" he calls. What does he mean? A great Guide, a Comforter, a Saviour, or a great Friend? Oh no! The Muslim thinks of God as a great Someone afar off, a great Judge to be feared, a great Power to be worshipped. He does not know that God is love, and that He delights to hear us talk to Him as a child talks to a loving father.

Some Muezzins are blind, and their work in life is just to be a "caller to prayer." Sometimes one sees two or three boys on the balcony with him, and he teaches them so that there will always be someone ready, day after day, to call people to prayer.

And as we think of this call to Muslim prayer, echoing around the world five times a day, let us see to it that we who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, begin our day with HIM. I heard once of a boys' school where the boys have a prayer meeting every morning before breakfast. Well, if one of the boys lies in bed, he misses his prayer time, and there is no other time all day to get it in.

I wonder if *you* think that "Prayer is better than sleep?" Or do you find it hard to get up early enough to spend a little time with God before beginning "the daily round and the common task?"

Sometimes one sees in people's houses, the following words printed on a little card which hangs on the wall,

"BEGIN THE DAY WITH GOD!"

What a splendid motto for every one of us.



Minaret in Temple Area, Jerusalem.

Don Ramon—fool of Love

(Part I.)

“No, that line won't do, I must try again.” In some such words as these a young man was talking to himself one July evening in the year 1266, as he was composing a love song. He was sitting on a couch in a lovely house in the town of Palma. This is the principal town of the Island of Majorca, one of the Balearic Islands which are found off the western coast of Spain. The young man was a Spaniard, Don Ramon by name, and he was enjoying a holiday in his own home after some years' work at the court of King James II of Aragon, a province of Spain. Ramon was the king's seneschal, which means he was the chief official in the royal household, and had the superintendence of feasts and ceremonies. He had a busy time, as the king liked to live in luxury, and there were many sumptuous feasts to be prepared. After seeing that all the guests were well provided for and enjoying their meals, Ramon would entertain them whilst they ate by playing a Spanish guitar called a cithern, for he was a clever musician. He was also a celebrated poet and sang songs of his own composition.

Hence, in his holiday time, he was spending his leisure adding to his repertoire. But somehow the song would not come right. It was a love song, and Ramon could not find suitable words to express his admiration of the lady to whom it was addressed. He was thinking about this and wondering how he could describe in his song the greatness of his love for her and his sorrow because she did not love him. Suddenly he saw a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ hanging on the cross. The blood was trickling down from His hands and feet, and from His brow, and He was looking reproachfully at Ramon. As Ramon gazed upon Him he realised that this was the highest and most wonderful love and he felt ashamed of the unworthy thoughts of love he had been attempting to describe in his song. He jumped up, throwing aside his cithern, and he went to bed leaving his song unfinished.

A week later he decided to work on it again, but the vision returned and the revelation of Divine love manifested in the Lord Jesus Christ toward him refilled his thoughts. His conscience was stung as he realised how little love he himself felt in return, but still he did not turn to the Saviour.

At last, after a third appearance of this vision, Ramon surrendered and gave himself unreservedly to love his Master, Who had loved him enough to die for him. Henceforth this love became the passion of his life, and he made love the motive and incentive of all he did.



*The Mosque of the Olive Tree, Tunis,
where later Lull preached the Gospel.*

The islands where Don Ramon lived belonged to Spain, but for some years they had been in the hands of the Saracens who had come over from North Africa and invaded them.

Ramon's father had been a soldier in the Spanish Army and had helped to fight against the Saracens, driving them out of the islands. As a reward he had been granted the large estate in Majorca which was his home. Now, as Ramon looked around for a field of work, he decided there could be no higher service than to preach the Gospel of Love to these Muslim Saracens against whom his father had fought.

It was the time of the Crusades and yet the weapons of the Crusading knights had failed to recapture Jerusalem from the hands of the followers of Muhammad. "I see," wrote Raymond Lull (for thus we spell his name in English) "many knights going to the Holy Land beyond the seas and thinking that they can acquire it by force of arms: but in the end all are destroyed before they attain that which they think to have. Whence it seems to me that the conquest of the Holy Land ought not to be attempted except in the way in which Thou and Thine apostles acquired it, namely, by love and prayers, and the pouring out of tears and blood."

The vision of the crucified Son of God remained with him and his love for Christ filled his heart and demanded an expression. He determined at all costs to seek out the Saracens and win them for the Master by love alone. How he became the first missionary to the Muslims will be written about later.

"When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of Glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

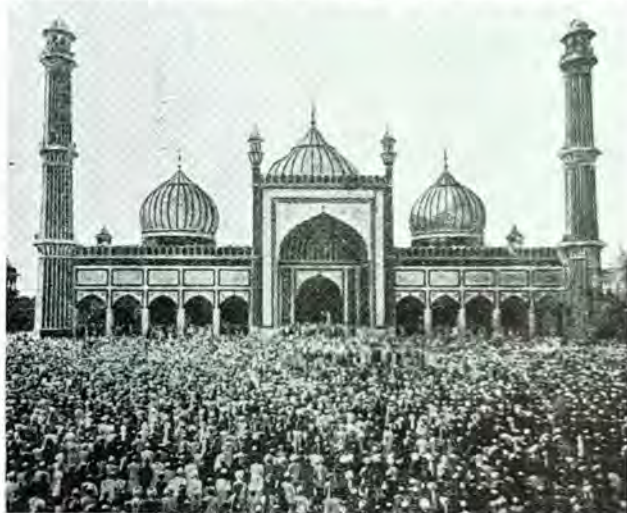
See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

Vain Repetitions

“When ye pray, use not vain repetitions as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.” (Matthew 6. 7.).

How wisely the Lord has spoken; there is always such quality in what He says and His discernment is so far beyond human wisdom. In words like these, how perfectly He reveals the ‘natural’ man in his ignorance of God and with his desire somehow to *earn* his own salvation. Vain repetitions, much speaking what a lot of it there is in India ! It would not be so bad



Muslims gathered before Mosque in Delhi, India.

if Hindus and Muslims displayed any expectancy of an *answer* to their petitions, but that is the last thing they seem to look for. Having gone through their prescribed ritual and numerous repetitions they are quite satisfied that they have done all that is necessary. Indeed they are convinced that they acquire much merit thereby. Yet Jesus has taught us that prayer is something which brings a response from God. How awful it is that so many of his creatures live without any knowledge of Him and offer Him so much vain repetition in place of real communion.

These were the thoughts of a missionary as she lay on her bed on a hot night in April, thinking things out. She often thought

things out on her bed—it was the only place where the mosquitoes didn't bite, and where one could be reasonably hopeful that no one would call ! It was not exactly comfortable—bed is not a comfortable place at the end of April in India, but at least it was quiet and there was a hope that the night would cool off a bit as it wore on. She and her fellow missionary had been glad to get to bed after the long day of intense heat. As they lay there on the verandah of their little bungalow under a brilliant starlit sky, grasshoppers ticked away incessantly all around them and some vigorous crickets behind the bungalow doors kept up their loud chirruping. Every now and then a bat sailed above their mosquito nets, and occasionally a moving form in the shadows of the garden betrayed a stray dog slinking away down the path. A new moon was coming up and casting its strange ethereal light over everything. The two missionaries lay talking over the events of the day. One had been taking the Gospel Message to the villages, riding on a two-wheeled cart and then walking long distances in the fierce heat. The other had been teaching Muslim women and girls in the Zenanas in the bazaar. These two missionaries went by the simplest of names; the native people had noted that one of them was tall and thin so they had promptly called her the 'Long One'; but when the other missionary appeared on the scene, finding her taller still, they decided that she be called the 'Very Long One.' The missionaries had become used to hearing themselves referred to in this way, at least the Long One had, but the Very Long One had only recently come to the Station and was a bit new to village ways !

The visiting in the Zenanas had been difficult work that day. It was an experience in one of these houses which had started the Long One thinking over the 'Vain repetitions' as she lay on her bed. Little Azizan had been so proud of her efforts with the reading lesson that morning; she had memorised the whole piece by heart, but when tested as to what she had read about, she had not the remotest idea ! Asked to start reading in the middle of the piece, she was completely bewildered and wanted to go back to the beginning to get into the 'swing' of it again. It had been comparatively easy to repeat the passage over and over till she had it by heart, but it had required no effort of *thinking*. That was just the trouble—no-one seemed to want to think. It was the same with their praying. The vain repetitions were easy compared with *real* prayer. And they gave one a sense of being virtuous too.

But what was that ? The Long One suddenly propped herself up on her elbow and listened. Had she heard aright; was that a distant beating of drums, or was she mistaken ? Yes, it sounded like a procession and it was getting slightly louder as if it were coming nearer. She wondered if the Very Long One had noticed anything; apparently not, for she was calmly going all round the inside of her mosquito net with a torch, hunting for a stray mosquito which had somehow got inside and had bitten her ! The Long One smiled to herself. If the noise was what she thought it was, the night was not going to be very peaceful. But she would wait a bit and see. The sound of drums was certainly getting clearer and the clang of cymbals could now be heard also. Suddenly the Very Long One paused in her search for the mosquito. "I say," she called, "is there something coming along this road; that sounds like drums doesn't it ?" "Yes, you're right," the Long One answered, "there *is* something coming and it will be here very soon ! It is a procession of Muslims and they are making for the graveyard just beyond our wall." (There was the grave of a Muhammadan saint just beyond the Mission Compound and the Long One had seen midnight outings to this place before). "Oh dear," sighed the Very Long One, "will they be long about it ? I really am tired." "It will be a matter of an hour or more," said the Long One, who could not help being amused, although she herself was tired too and could have wished the Muslims did not have to visit the grave of their saint in the middle of the night. Or if they could have done it quietly, it would not have been so trying, but they always seemed to collect up their noisiest instruments for these occasions ! "Dear me, it *was* hot,"—she wiped the trickling perspiration from the back of her ears and neck and turned her pillow over to get a dry side. By this time the Very Long One was peering through her mosquito net to see what was coming down the road. The noise was increasing steadily and one drum stood out above all the rest, as, with frightful poundings, it heralded the approach of the procession. "Oh, here they come," called out the Very Long One, "what a 'to do' it is, isn't it ? And don't they look queer ?" Indeed they *did* look queer; they were shrouded in long white garments and looked like spectres in the moonlight. The noise from their musical (?) instruments was almost deafening now as they drew opposite the Mission bungalow some fifty yards from the missionaries on the verandah. "Do you think we ought to go inside?" the Very Long One called out; she was not used to



A Dervish Procession in Egypt.

midnight processions at quite such close quarters! "Oh no, don't worry," the Long One replied, "it's the grave they're visiting, not us! See they are stopping now and will soon go round the corner." Sure enough the whole procession was coming to a halt right opposite and then with a tremendous rolling of drums and crashing of cymbals, the 'music' suddenly ceased and the party slowly disappeared beyond the corner of the Mission Compound. The Very Long One heaved a sigh of relief. "I wish that was all," she said, "Whenever shall we get any sleep?" Meanwhile loud chattering and talking could be heard going on at the graveside, but when this eventually died down, a man's voice could be heard, repeating portions of the Quran. On and on it went in a monotonous fashion for a very long time, till the two missionaries had almost drifted off into sleep. Then with a fearful pounding, the big drum started up once more and this was the signal for the procession to move off back along the road, crashing on their cymbals as they departed noisily on their homeward way. The Long One turned over drowsily in bed. What a night to be sure! Vain repetitions, much speaking, man looking on the outward appearance, a religion of much observance, but no knowledge of HIM who looks on the HEART.

Ethel Tongue (B.C.M.S.)

The Wordless Book

We use it quite a lot in Egypt. It contains four pages and not a word is written upon them—yet they convey a message which is easily understood. *The black page*, speaking of sin and death; *the red*, telling of the precious cleansing blood of Christ; *white*, the symbol of purity, a blood-washed heart, and a holy life; and lastly the *golden page*, telling of the glories which are yet to be revealed. Let me show you another wordless book today, a picture book of life in Egypt.

Black. A group of women dressed all in black, even their faces covered with black veils, sitting in a dark, dirty room, weeping and wailing, for the body of a dear one has just been carried out for burial, and they are stricken at the loss, and without hope. Another woman comes to the doorway. She enters and goes round touching the hands of all whom she knows, but she utters no word of greeting (it would be considered out of place) but only murmurs "May God comfort you." They sit in silence, and then this last comer begins to speak, telling of One Who can draw near to comfort, because He took upon Himself our nature and suffered and sorrowed as we do. Here and there a head is lifted and someone listens, but most sit in deep depression, and again and again the wailing breaks out afresh, cheeks are slapped and breasts are beaten in an excess of grief.

Red. A young man is crying on the floor, his face is twisted with pain, blood stains his garments. He has been beaten cruelly by his father in an attempt to make him forsake the strange new way he is following and return to the faith of his fathers; but at night he slips away and finds a shelter with some true believers, and he continues on that narrow, lonely path. "The way of the Cross means sacrifice," and is often marked with the blood-drops and the teardrops that pain wrings out.

White. A group of very little children sitting around their teacher, their big eyes alight with wonder as she tells them of Jesus and His Love. One little voice whispers, "I love Him too!" They look like a patch of woodland flowers once seen, opening their petals in the early light of dawn, this first unfolding of their budding love. "Jesus called a little child unto Him." He is still calling them, and many respond as simply as that little one.

Gold. "Riches!"—"The riches of His inheritance in the saints." His people are His treasure when wholly yielded and obedient to His will. In Egypt there are consecrated men and women whom He can use when and where He will. Look at "Vera," she is just a simple young woman, a teacher of the lower classes in one of our schools—not very highly educated, but taught of the Spirit, and after school she goes from home to home as His messenger, pointing many to the Saviour, and has led souls to surrender at His feet. "Florence" takes her Bible and going into houses, asks permission to read to them from the Word of God. "Lucy" before she entered into the glorious experience of being "with the Lord" sat up in her bed in a large hospital ward, and spoke to the sick women grouped around her, of the amazing grace of God in sending His Son to be a Saviour from all sin. "Zoe," crippled from childhood and bed-ridden now, draws many into her room which is a hallowed place, for there she communes with her Lord.

Black and Red, and White, and Gold. These scenes could be multiplied again and again. Read this book and take the message to your own heart. What is your response to be?

Helen L. Holmes (E.G.M.).

The Weaving of Said, the Silk Weaver

(Translation of an Arabic story).

There was in time past a man whose name was Said, the Silkweaver, and he frequented the sons of wickedness, and entered with them into a conspiracy to kill the king of the country. And in the end the king learnt of the matter, and imprisoned them and sentenced them to death. But the heart of the king had pity on Said, because he was still young, and it seemed to the king that this treachery was none of his devising, and Said cried for mercy from the hand of the king. And the next morning the king called for him and said, "O Said, I have found thee a way that shall be to thee a means of saving thee. I have heard that thy trade is that of silkweaving, and I



Winding a Silkspool by hand.

will that thou dost work me a beautiful girdle, and I will measure by its beauty thy repentance from this crime, and it shall be to thee a cause of my having compassion on thee; but on the fourth day thou must bring it to me."

When Said heard the words of the King he could have flown with joy, and he returned to the prison, and the king sent him the loom and silks of all colours, and Said set up the loom in the court of the prison, and began to work a pattern of great beauty, and slept in peace.

But when he rose in the morning and began to work, the work became before him as darkness, for he saw two holes burnt in the girdle and other places singed, and Said understood, without anyone telling him, that this misfortune came from the hands of his enemies, that is to say, from the wicked friends who had incited him to crime, and who envied him when the king made him a means of escape, and for this cause they had burnt his work with matches while he slept. With vexation in his heart, Said began another piece, and put his might into it, and in the evening he ate his supper of bread and olives and gathered up the crumbs, and spread his mat whereon he slept, and went on to work again till the night fell

And the whole night he was restless and watching against the enemies.

And when the day rose he looked at his work and found a new misfortune, that is that all that he had worked in the night had come out soiled, for in his haste he had forgotten to wash his hands when he began to work.

And Said's face became pale with fear, for he thought on the time, that is, that the morrow was the limit given him by the king, and also he feared for the silk that it would not suffice him.

That morning there came in the son of the king to see the prisoners, and his eyes fell on Said, and seeing him troubled and pale he said to him, "what hast thou, O man, that thy colour has changed?" And Said told him of the affair of the girdle, how it had been arranged with the king, and what had happened to him with it, and Said said to the king's son: "O Sir, I know that the king has but one word, and he wishes to see by the work of the girdle and its beauty, my repentance; and tomorrow of necessity I must bring it before him, and thou seest what has

happened to me, Sir, and this is the cause of my misery." And the king's son looked on him with eyes of pity and compassion, and said to him, "Fear not, I will make thee a means of escape, if God will."

But Said's heart would not leave him in peace. He did not understand how the king's son could help him, and the whole day he worked at a new girdle; then through the whole night he worked till near the dawn, and at that hour sleep conquered him. And when he rose to examine his work he found that the girdle was still short, and only a very little silk remained to him, for he had wasted much, and above that he found that he had mistaken, in the light of the lamp, between the red and the pink, and all that he had worked in the night was spoilt and mixed. At last Said's heart was stifled, and hope was cut off from his life, for how could he show this girdle to the king, and there remained to him neither time nor silk to work another, and he knew himself as dead.

But there was a way of escape for him that as yet was hidden from him and this was it. The king's son had gone out with his heart full of compassion for Said, and had said in himself, "I will consider the matter, concerning this girdle with which Said can do nothing." And he put on a weaver's dress and went to their quarter, and borrowed the use of a loom, and worked the whole day and the whole night, for all trades were known to him, and as for the girdle that he worked, none was like it on the face of the earth for beauty. And it came to pass that in the moment when poor Said waited for the soldiers to lead him to the house of judgment, the door of the prison opened, and the king's son entered and stood before Said, and said to him: "O my brother, show me thy work." And when Said heard this he fell on his face before the king's son, and showed him the three spoilt pieces, and said to him:—"Sir, thou seest the three pieces all spoilt; I have wasted all the silk in vain and there is only death before me." But the king's son said to him, "Open thine eyes." And Said lifted his head to see, and the king's son opened the girdle that he had wrought in its length, and said to him, "Be not anxious or fearful—offer this girdle to the king with a quite heart." And the king's son told him what he had done for his sake, and Said was astonished, and his heart was filled with such love for the king's son as he had never felt. And when the soldiers came to lead away Said, he threw away his own pieces on the



Preparing Silk for Weaving.

ground, and took up the girdle of the king's son, and the king's son went with him. And Said confessed before the king what had befallen him over the work that he had spoilt altogether, and told him of the wonderful goodness and love of his son, who had saved him in the moment when only death appeared before him. And after these words Said arose and opened the girdle before the king, and the king looked on his son and smiled on him, and looked on Said and smiled on him also, and said to him, "O Said, thou art pardoned and accepted for the sake of my son; from henceforth sin no more." And Said went free to his house, and all his life long he brought all his best work to the palace, to show by it the praise and the love that filled his heart towards the king and his son.

From the Librarian

The postman comes to the door three times a day bringing letters, but the Librarian would have none if she had to depend on "Challenge" Readers! She has plenty to do, answering other letters, sending off books to grown-ups, and so on, to keep her from getting too terribly fat and lazy—but she would like to interest you too! Perhaps you didn't know what the books were about? If that is the reason, we had better say a bit more about the contents.

First, here are two from the last list in "Challenge":—

No. 108. "An Heroic Bishop"—the life of Bishop French of Lahore, who went to what is now Pakistan to start a school in Agra. It was nearly forty years since Henry Martyn and his friends had been told that they must not do missionary work there. The book tells of French's work as a schoolmaster, and later when made Bishop, of his visits to Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, Tunis, Egypt, and his death in Muscat, on the shores of Arabia.

No. 162. "Thamillah" (Turtle Dove) is a Kabyle girl. She enjoyed her life in the hill country of South Algeria, and while still a girl (she would be still a schoolgirl in England) she was married. Though she loved her "Prince Charming," her life was

gradually made unhappy through lies being told to him, and by threats of "bad luck" which she had been taught to believe could be brought by charms. Later she was divorced, then married again, and finally she died in a hospital, a stranger and a beggar. This book shows what comes of faith in Islam even for people like Thamillah and her husband, who would have been happy left to themselves.

That is one book for boys and one for girls. Now for some new ones:—

No. 58. "In Desert and Town." This is a short story of only 64 pages, but it gives an intensely interesting account of life in Muslim lands by M. M. Wood. It tells us something about Muhammad's life and the experiences of new missionaries, also of one Muslim who became a Christian.

No. 165. "Between the Desert and the Sea." The title sounds like the first mentioned, but it is written by quite another person. The authoress is the well-known Miss Lilius Trotter who served her Master for so many years in Algeria in spite of poor health. She was a wonderful artist, giving up for the Gospel's sake what might have been a promising career in England, with her pictures hung in the Royal Academy. You can judge for yourself something of her talent by her illustrations in the book.

No. 90. "The Branded Foot," by A. Forder (226 pages). This is an exciting story of a missionary's life and experiences amongst the Arabians.



Challenge

and Counter Challenge

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سَلَامٌ عَلَيْكُمْ

'Salaam alaykum'
(Peace be upon you!)

Snow was falling heavily in Glasgow as a great liner sailed down the Clyde one December evening, bound for the Middle East. Two young lady missionaries on board were thrilled at the thought of Christmas at sea.

Neither of them had spent this season away from home before, so on Christmas morning their thoughts naturally turned to Christmas trees, stockings, crackers, cards and presents, and carol-singing. They were over-joyed to know that a Service would be held on board that morning.

The ship's dining-room had been gaily decorated and the passengers were in a festive spirit. The Christmas dinner of four courses would have done justice to Buckingham Palace—at least so our young friends thought! Certainly the crew had done everything possible to make Christmas a happy time.

On Boxing Day evening the young missionaries stood straining their eyes for a glimpse of Egypt. A myriad of stars twinkled in an indigo sky, then suddenly in the distance they sighted the harbour lights of Port Said.

Early next day they disembarked and were walking through the streets accompanied by Mr. West, an elderly missionary, who had come to welcome them. "Strange," said one young lady, "there are no signs of Christmas here at all. There are no decorations in the houses or shops. Nobody seems to know that it *is* Christmas!"

"It *isn't* Christmas here—at least not as we know it!" replied Mr. West, "for Christmas to us means the birthday of the Lord Jesus Christ, and our festivities centre round the peace and joy which He brought when He came to earth. But you are now in a Muslim land where the Babe of Bethlehem is not recognised as the Son of God, and they do not realise the blessings we have inherited because of His coming to live amongst us."



At that moment a Sheik in long flowing robes passed them and greeted Mr. West with the words "Salaam alaykum!"

"What was he saying?" asked the young missionaries, anxious not to miss anything. "He said, 'Peace be unto you'", answered Mr. West.

"What a lovely greeting!" they exclaimed.

"Yes, the actual words are beautiful, but it is sad to realise that Muslims do not understand the futility of wishing God's peace to rest upon others without acknowledging that the only One Who can give us peace is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace."

"PEACE BE UNTO YOU!"

All or Nothing !

(A story told by an old Kabyle).

A man, who found himself short of money, was forced to sell his house. Not wishing to be entirely quit of it, yet unable to do without the money which this sale would bring in, he made one condition—that he be allowed free use of a nail that was on the outside of the door. This condition was accepted.

After a few months, having saved enough money to buy back his house, he called on the buyer and asked him to sell back to him the house. “Nothing doing,” said the man, “I am very comfortable here,” and, in spite of all arguments, he would not change his mind.

So the man tried another way to get back his house. He remembered the nail which he was entitled to use, and every morning he hung his *burnous* (heavy cloak) on it and took it away again at night. But this had no effect.

Then he tried another way, and this time hung the skin of a newly-killed jackal on the nail, but this time he did not remove it at night, nor the next night, nor the night following. Much annoyed, the owner protested to the man who had become his enemy. “I am quite within my rights” was the only answer.

Needless to describe the sequel—an undressed skin hanging in the hot sun, full of flies, produced an intolerable situation. The house was no longer habitable ; so it was given back to the man who had been so determined to get what he wanted.

What shall we say to this story, so like others in the East ?

How many people, anxious to benefit by God’s free gift of salvation, surrender their lives to Him but with the inward reserve of keeping back a certain part for themselves. This, like the nail in the story, is taken hold of by the devil and used by him in such a way that finally he succeeds in gaining control of the whole life once again.

S. Arthur, Azazga,
North Africa Mission
(Originally written in French).

Whose Yoke ?

Every day in Syria and Lebanon hundreds of Arabs go out to plough their land in the same way that they have done for centuries. The oxen are yoked and the wooden plough hooked between them ; then the man places his right hand on the plough and takes his goad in the left.

Our Lord must have seen this sight every day of His earthly life, and indeed fashioned many a plough with His own hands, whilst the lessons He taught from it are ones we all need to learn.



“ No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.” The ploughman cannot possibly plough a straight furrow if he takes his eye off the ground ahead: neither can the Christian walk along the straight and narrow path that leads to glory if he takes his eye off the Lord Jesus Christ.

“ Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me.” What a thrilling invitation to walk along life’s journey yoked together with the Lord Jesus Himself, treading the paths that He chooses and sharing His concern for those who are heavily burdened and do not know Him.

The yoke is symbolic of Syria's history, for until 1945 she has always been under the yoke of a foreign power—Persia, Greece, Rome, Turkey and France. Now at last she has her political freedom, but there are still many “yokes” which keep her sons and daughters in bondage, and Islam is not the least of these. Who will pray that it may be broken?—perhaps through some of the boys and girls now in our Mission Schools who may be won for the Lord Jesus whilst they are young, before their hearts are completely steeled against Him.

Let me introduce you to two of our schoolgirls in Baalbec. Mariam used to live in Damascus, that stronghold of Islam, where she went to St. Paul's School for a year. There she did not have to attend Scripture lessons because the Government forbids Muslim girls to do so, but she was taught Ethics instead. Last year her family moved to Baalbec in Lebanon where there is freedom to teach Scripture to all, so now Mariam has to come to Scripture lessons, and it “goes against the grain!” Not only does she argue herself, but she stirs up the other Muslim girls, and one day even organised a strike in Scripture! Surely the Holy Spirit is working in her heart and she is kicking against the pricks.

Zainab comes from Persia, sent by the Government for an Arabic teacher-training. Before she came she thought that all Arabic-speaking people were Muslims and that none belonged to any other religion! Her brother is also in Lebanon, studying at the University in Beirut, and one day he bought her a Quran, but she does not often read it for she has become intensely interested in the Bible now.

The first time she heard about the raising of Lazarus from the dead she was amazed. She loves to sing and join in prayers and does not mind when she is teased for it. Surely it is God Himself Who has sent her to us that she may be freed from the bondage of Islam through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Surely, too, He plans to use her to lead other girls to Christ when she returns as a teacher to her own land.

If the Lord Jesus has said to you, “Take My yoke upon you,” will you not share His longing that Mariam and Zainab may find Him, too?

E. M. Thomson
(*British Syrian Mission*).

Don Ramon—fool of Love

(Part II.)

Don Ramon paced the streets of Palma. He looked ill and restless. It was some weeks since the vision of the Man on the Cross had appeared to him. He had resigned his office at the court of King James of Aragon, and had come home to his father's castle. But though he knew he must henceforth live his life for the Lord Jesus Who had died for him, and seek to tell the Muslims of this love, he was puzzled as to how to set about it, and overwhelmed by the difficulties and seeming impossibilities of the task.

The festival of St. Francis came round, and Ramon went to the Church named after that Saint, in Palma. There he listened again to the story of St. Francis, heard how he had left all to follow Christ, even going into the camp of the Muslims to proclaim Jesus as Son of God.

After the service, Don met the preacher, who was a cousin of his, and as they walked part of the way home together Ramon told him of the visions he had had, and said, "I did not know what it was all leading to until to-day, but now I know. Your sermon has helped me."

"Will you become a monk like St. Francis?" asked his cousin.

"No, I am not a Saint like St. Francis," replied Ramon, "I am not worthy to be a monk."

"Will you join a Crusade and go and fight?" questioned the preacher.

"I shall go on a Crusade, yes! But not the sort you are thinking of. I see many knights going to the Holy Land and other Muslim countries, thinking they can conquer with weapons of war, but they never do. There is but one way to conquer, the way of Christ and His Apostles—love and prayer and the pouring out of tears and blood. But though St. Francis had the courage of love to go in this way to the Muslims, I realise that he lacked one great essential—he did not know their language, Arabic."

"You don't know it either!" exclaimed his cousin.

“No, but I shall learn it,” said Ramon. “I shall study the language so that I can speak and write in their own tongue. I shall try to find out exactly what they believe and all the learning and laws of Islam so that they will not call me ignorant.”



Interior of Mosque

“What! You? the finest poet in Spain? You cannot waste yourself like that. It will take a life-time and even then perhaps you may fail or die with the work half done.”

“It will be a work of love,” said Ramon, “He that loves not, lives not. He that lives by the Life cannot die.”

The cousins parted and Ramon went home to his father's castle for the last time. He had now made up his mind once and for ever. He sold all his property and gave the money to the poor, keeping only a small allowance for his wife and children.

He made a vow of consecration, using these words, “To Thee, Lord God, do I now offer myself, and my wife and my children, and all that I possess; and since I approach thee humbly with this gift and sacrifice, may it please Thee to condescend to accept all that I give and offer up now for Thee, that I and my wife and my children may be Thy humble slaves.”

He followed up his words with deeds. He rented a small bare room in Palma and there settled down to begin his study of Arabic. Without the help of modern textbooks or dictionaries it was a colossal task and took him nine years to accomplish. But his love for His Lord was the passion of his life, so that like Jacob, the years of his service "seemed to him but a few days for the love that he had"

Are our years of service so full of love that they seem like days, or are we more often conscious of the heat and burden of the day that we murmur as did the labourers in the vineyard?

"Let me love Thee, love is mighty,
Swaying realms of deed and thought ;
By it I shall walk uprightly,
I shall serve Thee as I ought :
Love will soften ev'ry sorrow,
Love will lighten ev'ry care,
Love unquestioning will follow,
Love will triumph, love will dare."

(To be continued).



Ploughing

The Light Has Shone.

A Chinese Muslim Schoolboy Finds Christ.

“There is a Muslim schoolboy in hospital just now and he is very ill. Would you go to see him?” Needless to say I did not need a second invitation. When I found him in the ward I noticed a New Testament beside his bed. Another missionary and the Chinese hospital evangelist had already been to see him. He was keen to talk about spiritual things and had begun to read the New Testament eagerly.



A Chinese Hospital Evangelist

To help this seeker and the others in his ward to understand and accept the truths they were being taught every day, I went in one evening, as was my custom, to show Palestine and Gospel slides. Great was his interest and enjoyment, as in this way we visited some of the sites of events in the life of Christ of which he had been recently reading.

Unfortunately the day came when the doctors had to tell him that his disease was incurable. Not long after this his family came to take him away. We visited him one day in his home and he was as bright as ever. The glory of heaven seemed to fill that dim room as he told of his continued joy in the reading of the New Testament. "Before I read this" he told us, "the future was dark and full of foreboding, just like an unknown path overhung with heavy clouds, but now—the light has shone and everything has become clear."

Wondering just how much he meant by this I questioned him as to what he personally knew and thought of Christ. I soon realised by his replies that he was indeed trusting in Jesus as Saviour, and that he believed Christ died on the Cross for him, and that He rose again from the grave.

The next time we called to see him the room was empty. "Where has Tsung Ren been moved to?" we asked. "Oh, to Lakeside village. The air is better down there than here in the town." We felt suspicious that this was not the truth. Sure enough, enquiries we made from a Christian school friend of his who had attracted him to Christ before he entered hospital, showed that his family were trying to hide him from us. He was actually in a room in a temple courtyard in quite the opposite direction from Lakeside village!

So to the temple one day we made our way. Tsung Ren was obviously weaker in body and we could see the effects also of what his relatives had been saying to him about his interest in the Christian religion. Gone was the precious New Testament from his bedside. Gone was the brightness from his face, though I believe in his heart he was glad to see us.

"My mother says that reading will only make me weaker, so she has taken away my New Testament and all other books," he explained rather awkwardly and sadly. We sought to comfort and encourage him during our necessarily short visit. We felt that light and darkness were struggling together for his soul. We could only leave him in the Lord's hands, believing that the light would win. Had it

At first the road passes through stony and sandy hills, and except for a few desert plants, there is no vegetation. It is a fairly straight road but occasionally one passes between tar barrels placed at the sides of the road. These are painted white and filled with sand, and are warnings to travellers to keep to the road. One would think, with so many warnings, that accidents would be very infrequent, but one is amazed to see many traces in the sand of cars having left the road and later returned to it.

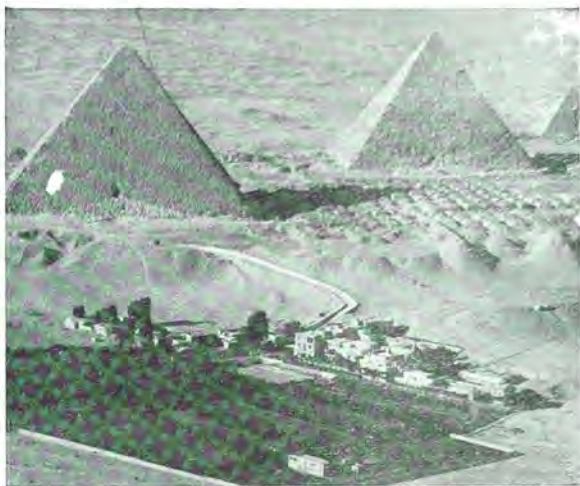
Worse still, one passes totally wrecked vehicles lying on the sand, which unwittingly left the good road, and skidding in the sand, overturned.

Apart from these there is little else to be seen on the journey but desert, until we approach the "Half-way Rest House," where travellers may rest and obtain refreshments, while the driver refills the radiator of the 'bus with water.

After about twenty minutes the journey is resumed and nothing of interest passed until suddenly, on the side of the road one sees large advertisements of the good things to be bought in Cairo, and in the distance can be seen the edge of the green, fertile plain of the Delta. Still one passes advertisements, and one, written in English, announces "Mena House—Calm and Comfort."

Then on the horizon appear the Pyramids. The nearer we get to them the more colossal they seem, and as we pass them we draw near to the famous hotel, "Mena House." Here the road curves to the left and we find ourselves travelling down a gentle slope, and now the road is far more lively ; trams, horses, donkeys with and without carts, lorries and cars, and many people coming and going. We are in Cairo, and soon our 'bus is well in the heart of a noisy, bustling Oriental city.

Whenever I travel on that road I am reminded of the journey through life. God has given us many "warnings" in His Word, the Bible, yet we see around us traces of failings, traces of sin, and sad to say there are some who get so far away from the good road that their lives resemble those wrecked vehicles.



Perhaps at times our life-road seems monotonous, like the desert road, but in life, too, God gives us "rest houses" and times of refreshing, as we read His Word and spend time in prayer with Him.

Then as we near the end of life's journey we begin to realise the wondrous glory that lies ahead, just as we had the lovely view of the plain near Cairo.

But before we can enter that fertile land we must pass the Pyramids, and these speak of death, for they were built nearly 5,000 years ago as burial places for the Pharaohs. However, just as "Mena House" with all its calm and comfort was nearer to us on the road than the Pyramids, so the Lord Jesus will give us rest and comfort in Himself, and take away the fear of death, bringing us into the glory of Heaven.

Clara E. Peter (Swiss Evangelical Mission)

Keshkoosha (*Froth*)

The scene is the dispensary of the North Africa Mission in Tripoli, on a busy morning. The woman pulls her covering around her, hiding her medicine in its voluminous folds, and asks, for at least the third time, when she is to take it. Finally she covers her face until just one eye is left to guide her through the jostling crowds.



A Village Dispensary in Egypt

Then as an after-thought she comes back and almost whispers, "When are you coming beside us?" This means that a hitherto unvisited house is opening its door to us and we seek to make the most of the opportunity thus afforded.

"Where do you live?" we ask. A bewildering series of directions follows—nothing so simple as the name of the street and number of the house. The poor woman cannot read, so why should she bother with such things as names and numbers? We seize upon such outstanding landmarks as the ice-factory, a well-known mosque, a fountain, and finally a blue door. We still look somewhat befogged, and despairing at our stupidity and ignorance, she promises to send a child to fetch us. The child duly arrives—an hour or so before we expected her—and armed with flannelgraph and pictures, we sally forth.

Passing through a maze of narrow streets we reach the blue door which opens by an unseen hand on the inside, and soon we are in the courtyard surrounded by our friend of the morning and all her neighbours. We are ushered into a room and the cry goes up for a chair. We assure our hostess that we prefer to sit on a mat on the floor. We note with relief that the charcoal fire is already burning and the teapot boiling thereon. Do not assume from this that we are longing for a drink of Tripoli tea, defying as it does, all the rules of tea-infusing and hygiene! But having entered our friend's home it would be the height of rudeness to refuse to drink her tea. This process, however, takes anything from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 hours, and can take even longer if the fire has not previously been kindled.

We answer all the usual questions, "Are you married?" "Have you any children?" "Where do you come from?" etc. Meanwhile the little enamel teapot boils merrily, more tea-leaves having been added to the remains of yesterday's brew! The fire is fanned by a daughter of the house. A little wooden table about 4 inches high is in front of her, with tea glasses about the size of a medicine glass. There are seldom more than six of these no matter how large the party, for after the honoured guests have drunk, the glasses can be refilled and passed (unwashed) to the others!

There is a tin of sugar, a spoon, an extra teapot or other receptacle and a sponge for wiping the table. By her side is an aluminium bowl full of water in which the glasses are washed after each "course." There are three "courses"—the strong, bitter glass course, the weaker and sweeter mint course, and the peanut or almond course. Yes, the nuts are actually drunk with the tea in the glasses! The idea of three glasses is to give plenty of time for conversation, but when our object is not just to gossip but to present Christ, the problem arises—when shall we produce our pictures and introduce our message? If at the beginning, the whole tea-making ritual may be held up while the women gather round to look, if while the tea is being prepared the distractions are many, and if at the end we may risk losing our audience.

So if we get the opening we need, we begin almost as soon as we have arrived, and then if we are asked for more, we proceed until our stock of pictures is exhausted.

The first glass is prepared by pouring the tea from the pot (which is held high above the table) into another pot. If the tea has been well boiled, this should produce a froth. This froth is then transferred to the tea glasses, and the more expert the tea-maker the more froth there is! The strong, bitter liquid is then added and the froth, or keshkoosha as we call it, floats on top, sometimes half-filling the glass.

This froth has often been a lesson to me. After all it is only show, just like the soap bubbles we blew when we were young and which afterwards disappeared into space. The Muslim religion is like that—all froth and show—but underneath nothing but bitter hardness of heart. Their speech is so polite and gracious, the name of Allah so often on their lips, but underneath nothing but dregs. “This people honoureth Me with their lips but their heart is far from Me,” might well have been written of Muslims.

Let us beware, young Christians, that we are not likewise “all froth.” See that young person lustily singing in the missionary meeting :

“Love so amazing, so divine,

Demands my life, my soul, my ALL.”

See him or her in the emotion of the moment, at the end of a moving address, promising to give him or herself to God for His service—to pray, to give, to GO in order that His Kingdom may be extended. Then see that one many years later, settling down to a life in an office, workshop, hospital or school, engaging in Christian service perhaps in his or her spare time, but not fully satisfied. Why? Because God’s challenge was not fully responded to, the enthusiasm was only froth, and when the winds of difficulty blew it died away, and life will never be the same again for the one who heard God’s call and rejected it.

And so we drink our tea and tell our story—the story of the Saviour Who came and died for these poor, ignorant women, even as He died for you and me.

“Do the people respond?” you ask. Did *you* respond the very first time you ever heard the message preached? I wonder! These women who listened to-day may have heard the Gospel many years ago, but it is more likely that they

have never heard it before, and when will they hear it again? Not for some long time if all the unvisited homes in Tripoli are to get their turn, and what about the unreached villages and towns of Libya in its entirety? Find it on your map. See how vast it is and then consider that at the moment there are only two women to undertake this work of visiting. Ask the Lord what He would have you to do to meet this challenge.

Margaret A. Pearce
(*North Africa Mission*).

