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*Challenge*  
*and*  
*Counter*  
*Challenge*



Vol. I. No. I.

May-June, 1949.

## CHALLENGE AND COUNTER-CHALLENGE.

A Bi-monthly 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 jointly by the following Societies :—

### ALGIERS MISSION BAND

Campfield, Great Barton, Bury St. Edmunds,  
Suffolk

### BRITISH SYRIAN MISSION

119, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

### CENTRAL ASIAN MISSION

47, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

### EGYPT GENERAL MISSION

106, Highbury New Park, London, N.5

### FELLOWSHIP OF FAITH FOR MOSLEMS

62A, Tuddenham Road, Ipswich, Suffolk.

### FRIENDS OF THE MOSLEMS IN CHINA

53, Poets Road, Highbury, London, N.5.

### NORTH AFRICA MISSION

34, Bisham Gardens, Highgate, London, N.6.

Copies may be obtained from the Young People's Secretaries of any of the above Societies.

Price : 4d. per copy.     2/- per year.



## Editorial.

RINGING across the valley came the fearless voice of a youth counter-challenging his enemy. And what an enemy! A giant, clad from head to foot in apparently impregnable armour, brandishing a huge weapon. This attracted the special attention of the young man. "Thou comest to me with a sword . . . but I come in the Name ; . . ." A sword and a Name—what a contrast. But such a Name that inspired the utmost confidence, for it spoke of Omnipotence and Eternal Strength, and resulted in an absolute fearlessness which enraged the giant by its audacious boldness.

Surely we can find a parallel to this picture of the giant Goliath in the challenge of Islam. This false religion was founded by Mohammed 600 years after Christ died, in a small town in Arabia; but within fifty years had enveloped the whole of North Africa. By what means? The sword—"Kill your enemies, kill all the unbelievers wherever you find them"—says the Koran. And thus it grew until now its followers number over 300,000,000 people, who daily affirm that Mohammed is the Apostle of God, and deny the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When Saul and his army heard the challenge of Goliath they were afraid and fled. Only David, the stripling, was left to utter his indignant protest at such defiance of the Living God. So, too, the Church Militant seems asleep to the advancing menace of Islam, whose enthusiastic missionaries are in all parts of the world. Some Christians who deplore the situation do very little about it because of the seeming impossibility of the task: while the few who are tackling the job are often beset by the temptation to fear as they catch glimpses of the very thinly veiled sword which might easily flash forth as it did of old.

Here, then, is the opportunity for you young people whose hearts are hot with zeal for the honour of your King. Will you not pick up this Moslem 'glove' and enter the lists on behalf of the Lord Jesus? Have you not already proved the efficacy of *your* weapon, that Name which is above every Name . . . that new best Name of Love? For it is Love, nothing less than Calvary Love, which is going to win the Moslem world. Our standing orders are well-known—not 'kill' but 'love your enemies'.

It is to help you equip yourselves more thoroughly for this task that this magazine is being published. For as you read about the Moslems you will learn to love them; and as you learn to love them, you will find yourself pouring out your heart in more fervent prayer on their behalf, urged by a passionate desire to remove this reproach of Islam from your Beloved Lord and Master.



## Farmer Beautiful.

HELLO, Everybody! Meet 'Beautiful'. No, I'm not joking; that's the meaning of his name, Hassan. Yes, it's true that one of his eyes doesn't function very well, and he could do with a clean up, but you should have seen him when we first met him. He was trailing along behind his blacksmith father—who is no oil-painting—carrying a hammer and a spanner and looking as uninterested in life as a camel. You've seen how bored camels look at the Zoo, of course? Well, that was how Hassan always looked, only you had to take it for granted that there was a flesh-and-blood face under the ever-present layer of dirt. His father is an ex-patient from Shebin hospital, and is always doing little jobs about the place, so we got to know Hassan quite well.

One day, the old man who used to mind the hospital car when we were out visiting, died ; and we asked Hassan (then about ten years old) to take his place. He used to ride in the boot of the car, and, when we arrived at a village, he stood on guard very importantly until we returned from visiting. About two months ago we wanted a boy to help look after the cows at the Farm Colony and we thought of Hassan. He was pleased at the idea of coming, and so was his father. So out he came. And this is the Hassan I want you to meet.



He is about eleven years old now. In spite of one bad eye, when he is pleased and smiles he really looks quite attractive. He wears brown overalls which in Egypt they call an "afrita". An afrita is anything mysterious, whether it be an evil spirit, a car jack, or a photograph negative ! I suppose they call overalls by that name because they make the wearer look strange and mysterious. However, Hassan is quite a real boy, even disguised in his afrita, and is as

pleased to receive presents as any boy. The weather is quite cold in Egypt now (we recently had frost!) and Hassan had no shoes or socks. So we found a pair of warm socks and some shoes that would fit him. How pleased he was! The day he received them he cheerfully worked all day in his bare feet and then put on his shoes and socks to keep his feet warm when he went to bed.

The next day I looked out of the window as Hassan was bringing out the cows to feed them. One of them was a little bit excited and I think must have trodden on his toes. At any rate, he lifted up his new-booted foot to kick her. I called out to him, and then very solemnly told him that since he did not know how to use his shoes he must give them back. It was a very crestfallen boy that undid his shoes and returned them. Later that day, when asked if he were really sorry for trying to kick the cows, he said he was. But when he was told that he could have his shoes back again, his wounded pride (and all Egyptians can be proud) refused. "I have plenty of shoes" he lied, "and I don't want them back". However, he took them, and I don't think he will kick the cows again.

Hassan has never been to school, so after the day's work is done he comes along for reading lessons. He is really doing quite well, and is awfully pleased with himself every time he recognizes a word. Sometimes he is tired and doesn't want to come along for a lesson. On such occasions he usually has one stock excuse, "I can't come to-night, I've eaten onions for my supper".

We are very hopeful about Hassan. We want to win him and train him to work for the Lord Jesus in this country. Won't you help us by your prayers?

**NOTES.** (1) **Sa-la-mi** = the Chinese way of saying "Salaam" meaning Peace. Chinese syllables nearly always end with vowels.

(2) **Qur'an** = the Moslem Scripture or Holy Book.

(3) **People of Han** = the majority of the Chinese who are heathen.  
**People of Hui** = The Chinese who are Moslem in religion. No one knows why this name came to be used. It means "to return" and some think that it was because the Moslems "returned" to God from heathendom.

(4) **Ersa** = The name the Moslem Chinese people give to the Lord Jesus.

(5) **Translated** = the Moslems think it is wrong to translate the Qur'an into any other language than Arabic, in which it was first given to Muhammad.

## Overseas Mail.

North-West China.

April, 1949.

My dear Egyptian Elder-Brother,  
Sa-la-mi<sup>1</sup> from your Chinese younger brother.

In your country, Egypt, I have heard you all speak Arabic. I can't imagine how you use this difficult Scripture language all day; you must be wonderful people. My uncle understands Arabic well, and can read the *Qur'an*<sup>2</sup>, but even he speaks Chinese in the common things of life.

My father is a baker in the west suburb of Sining. Most of the Chinese people of Han<sup>3</sup> live inside the walls of the city, but there are many of us Hui, people of the Pure-True doctrine, in the suburbs near the east and west gates, and, of course, we do not eat food prepared by idolatrous eaters of the unclean beast.





We have all kinds of bread here in the North-West. My schoolmaster at the Mosque has travelled to many parts of China. He says that in the south the people never see bread, but eat rice as their main dish at every meal. We have noodles but we don't make it our chief food like the Eastern Chinese do. Bread is our food and other things are extra.

You should see our big round flat goh-kwei—what do you call a cooking-pot in Arabic, I wonder? How strange to think of using the language of Heaven to talk of cooking-pots. I can't get over the strangeness of it. Yet my grandfather could talk to your people when he went on pilgrimage years before I was born.

To come back to our bread, we have a nice round spiced loaf which the Han people call "Hui-hui t'eo" because they think it looks like a man's head, and we are the only people who make that special kind. Then there are the flat ones; and the little steamed loaves, which are so nice if you peel the skin off and eat it, and then eat the inside while they are still hot. We have bread made of maize, too, and other grain, but wheat from the spring crop is the best.

I am named after the Prophet Ersa<sup>4</sup>, (Peace be upon Him) and I have been once to the Good News Hall, where all the people are His followers. My father says we are all the same because we none of us worship idols like the people of Han and the Tibetans who come to our city. My uncle wouldn't let his daughters go to the Good News Hall though, for he says they speak against the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Surely no one could think anyone greater than the Latest Prophet, the Seal of the prophets.

I mean to go again and find out what they say; our neighbours have a book from them which they say is Scripture, but how could Scripture be written in Chinese? The schoolmaster did say once that in Peking and in a big foreign city called Shanghai they had the *Qur'an* in Chinese; but my grandfather who is very old and wise says that it must be that they merely 'explained' the words in Chinese, not translated<sup>5</sup> them. Anyway they must be very stupid, because I hear that they pulled down the walls of their cities in the eastern and southern parts of China! We live outside the walls, but we could all go in if the Communists came again. Our Governor is a Moslem and he defended us and killed every Communist last year when they tried to conquer this province.

Please answer this letter, and tell me something about your ways of living.

Sa-la-mi A-li-ku-ma.

## Islam Quiz.



“Interested in work amongst the Moslems, are you? Whoever are they? Followers of Muhammad, do you say? Well, that does not get me much forrader. Never heard of the chap! Who was he?”

I wonder what you would say in answer to a challenge like that! How much do you really know about Muhammad? Suppose you test yourself by seeing if you can pick out the right answers from the Quiz below. Try not to look at the crib on page 3 of cover, till you have attempted all the questions; then you can mark yourself, and see if you pass with honours: that is, 80 per cent!

1. Muhammad was (a) a Persian. (b) an Egyptian.  
(c) an Arabian.
2. His mother's name was (a) Amina. (b) Fatima.  
(c) Khadija.
3. He was born in (a) Mecca. (b) Morocco. (c) Medina.  
(d) Madagascar.
4. His father died (a) when he was a baby.  
(b) before he was born.  
(c) long after Muhammad himself.
5. The date of his birth was (a) A.D. 33. (b) A.D. 600.  
(c) B.C. 10. (d) A.D. 570.
6. The Kaaba is (a) a holy carpet. (b) a temple. (c) a black stone.
7. When Muhammad was a boy he was (a) well behaved.  
(b) badly behaved.
8. He suffered from (a) epilepsy. (b) apoplexy.  
(c) insanity.
9. He convoyed caravans to (a) India. (b) Syria.  
(c) Persia.
10. In Muhammad's early days the people of his country were all (a) Jews. (b) Christians. (c) Idolators.

## The People Who Sit.



ON coming to Egypt, many are struck by the ability of the people to sit. On arrival one certainly could be misled by all the bustle, noise and excitement that meets one on the wharf; but don't be deceived by any appearance of activity! It is spurious and spasmodic.

Go to the station and there the people sit on the platforms, squatting patiently as they wait for a train; in the market they sit and chat, or bargain over some article or other; in the fields they rest under the trees or by the roadside. On the doorsteps the women sit, and on the rooftops; or round the door of the flour-mill waiting for their corn to be ground; or on the canal bank before carrying the heavy pots full of water back to their homes. Two women meet and promptly sink on to the ground to have a gossip; or merchants conclude their business over a cup of coffee on the chairs in the café.

In the wealthier homes the women sit and watch their servants work . . . sit and entertain their visitors . . . sit all morning, afternoon and evening indoors or on the balconies; or they 'take their exercise' sitting on the seat of the carriage which carries them to a friend's house for another session! Heels form a natural stool, so they make good use of that which Providence has so benevolently provided.

Some people sit because they see no reason why they should exert themselves. "Let's sit a little" is frequently on the lips of old and young. The daily grumble of one girl after doing a few jobs with the minimum of exertion was, "I haven't had any time to sit down yet" although she knew that everything could easily be finished by noon, and then she would be free to *sit* till evening!

So often a woman replies smilingly, when asked why she was not present at a meeting, or something of that sort, "Oh, I was lazy. I just sat at home." And one is desperately tempted to be exasperated with workers who spend all their spare time lolling on their beds, rather than put it to some useful purpose; for few have hobbies or interests wherewith to buy up the shining hours.

Some people sit because they are perfectly contented with what they have attained. When there is no sense of sin or failure, a placid belief that by a little judicious almsgiving and a not-too-rigorous observance of religious rites one will be all right is quite sufficient to lull mind and conscience to a comfortable state of drowsiness. Thus sitting gives the acme of satisfaction, and so . . . they sit!

Others sit because they feel no useful purpose can be served by getting up. What is coming will come, so why get up to meet it? This is what they feel even if they don't say it, and a kind of resigned hopelessness paralyses their activity.

But many people sit because they cannot see. "Why do you sit here so long, my uncle?" someone asked an old man propped against a wall. "I cannot see. I must wait till someone comes to take me home." All over the land of Egypt they are sitting like that, waiting to be shown the Way that leads Home. There are empty aching hearts (as well as the drugged complacent ones) carried in the breasts of the old and sorrowful, the neglected and the unloved. They are sitting in darkness and waiting for someone to take them by the hand and pilot them safely into the path which leads to light. Who is it that they wait for? Is it you? Is God's message to His servant of old again His Word to you to-day? "I have called you . . . to bring . . . them that sit in darkness . . . out"? Then His promise is also for you, "I have called thee . . . I will give thee for a light."

## **When Daddy does the Washing . . .**

I do want to tell you about three children and a wee babe who live quite near me here in Morocco, and who attend my children's class. They are poor mites, these four, especially the two sisters and the babe. I had said they must come cleaner.

The next morning I rang the bell, and a neighbour came to say their clothes were wet, they could not come. Their mother goes out to work from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The father is a kind of hauler in the finer weather. He had washed their poor garments and they were not dry. However, I sent the neighbour back and said they were to come, as their coffee was hot. They came . . . much less grimy and

with less vermin, but each tied up in a cloth. I had one dress made and had to set to and make another to cover them; they were still cold but happy.

I love these little ones. The eldest has just changed two milk teeth; she is a perfect little mother to R—, about four, and H— about one year; but that wee girl is staunch and loyal to her father and mother and only speaks the good she can about them, otherwise shuts her little mouth.

She loves singing and has a clear treble voice, unlike most of these children. Her neighbours must be entertained as they hear her singing: "Jesus my Saviour to Bethlehem came, seeking for me, for me." She is our little soloist. All marvel at her memory and the way she keeps her tunes. We are turning into a tambourine band. I am trying to get them singing with expression and so we beat time, and it helps a lot!

## Missionary Mould.

### PART I. THE TELEGRAM.

"A telegram for you, Sir." The maid, dressed in black, wearing a starched white cap and apron, handed the orange envelope on a shining silver salver to the gentleman who was having dinner with his wife.

Eleanore was all agog to know what was in the wire. She was expecting to hear about the results of a music exam. True, such news was more likely to come through the medium of her music-teacher. But, then, you never know; she might have done so well that it was important enough to have to be wired to her parents. For she was of an optimistic nature, never more so than when estimating her own chances of success.

"Mother, isn't father going to open it?" she burst out, as her father calmly laid the envelope beside his plate, and went on with his dinner.

"Hush, dear, your father will open it when he is ready. There is no hurry; it is much too late for us to send an answer even if one is expected. I expect this is a business one that he is expecting.

Eleanore heaved a sigh of resignation over the casual ways of grown-ups. At twelve years old one's stock of patience is not very great even in the most phlegmatic children. And Eleanore certainly was not that type.

Witness the scene a few days before when she came slowly up the stairs bearing a tin full of hot, only-half-set toffee, her first efforts at sweet-making.

"Mother, mother, where are you?" One could not be long in the house without hearing that name on Eleanore's lips. She loved her mother with a passionate love that corresponded with her nature. "Mother, where are you? Look at the toffee I've made. It's for you. Do come and see it quickly."

Her mother appeared at the top of the stairs along with two big girls who were so absurdly alike that it was obvious they were twins.

"What?" said Gertrude, "do you mean to say that sticky mess is toffee?"

"Why didn't you call us to help you?" added Mabel, "we'd have shown you how to make it properly."

"Oh! Ah!" With a quick scream the twins jumped out of the way as the whole tin of hot liquid came hurtling towards them from the hands of the irate Eleanore. It missed them by a fraction of an inch and fell in a sticky stream on the balustrade and stairs.

"It's a pity you've done that, Eleanore," said the calming voice of her mother. "I was just going to say how very nice it looked. Now it won't taste nearly so nice mixed up with stair carpet and dust. Be quick, all three of you and get it cleaned up. Gertrude and Mabel, you must help her, you are as much to blame."

Eleanore remembered this incident as she sat with her eyes on that wire, trying to learn a new lesson in curbing her impatience. At last her father laid down his knife and fork and picked up the wire. He opened it and there was an ominous silence. Somehow or other Eleanore felt that this moment was going to be a momentous one in her life.

"The Lord gave, the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the Name of the Lord."

"Who is it, Rex?" asked Mrs. Thomson's anxious voice. "Who has died?"

"The Lord has called Maynard to his well-earned rest."

"Maynard? Did you know he was ill? Does it give any details?"

"No, this is the first I have heard. It simply says that he has died of cerebro-meningitis."

Their daughter listened with mixed feelings. Her chief thought was of her small cousin, whose father her parents were talking about. Margery was at a boarding school in Surrey, and all last holidays she had been talking of what she was going to do when her father came home. For he was a missionary doctor in Egypt, and his furlough was nearly due. It was he whose sudden death this telegram had announced. Silence fell again and then her father's voice broke it.

"Let us return thanks for the love and devotion of this servant to His Lord and Master, and for the inspiration which his life has been to us."

Eleanore was surprised at the emotion in his voice. As she listened to him pouring out his heart's gratitude to the Lord for the gift of this his friend she had her first glimpse of what real friendship could mean, something far bigger and higher than the school girl pashes of which she knew. But what was he saying now?

"Raise up, we pray Thee, O Lord, some soul to take his place; someone to fill the gap. Speak, Lord, to-night and call someone whom Thou wilt choose to carry on Thy work in this ancient land of Egypt."

The girl was awed; she seemed to have been transported far away from the dining-room to find herself standing midst a vast concourse of people around the Throne of God. But strangely enough everyone's gaze was directed, not towards the Throne, but downwards on to a battlefield where a fight was in progress. Eleanore looked too, and as she looked she saw a man fall, and the enemy making as if to take advantage of that gap to obtain the position for himself. She strained forward to watch. Would no one from the ranks of the Lord's army step forward and fill the gap? Surely someone would! But no one stirred; still the gap remained. Wasn't God going to send anyone? And suddenly she could hear it no longer. Impetuously, without waiting for a conscious call from the Lord, she pushed herself forward and cried, "Let me go!"

The tension passed; the prayer ended, and her parents began discussing Margery's future. Eleanore came back to earth with a bump, and interested in what they were saying, the vision faded from her mind. She forgot her offer of service.

But God had not forgotten. That impulsive cry had been registered in heaven. God had accepted her, and began forthwith to deal with His young gap-filler that she might be more perfectly moulded to fill it adequately according to His purpose.

*(To be continued).*

## ANSWERS TO ISLAM QUIZ.

1. Muhammad was a descendant of Abraham through Ishmael, and belonged to the Arabian tribe known as the Koreish.
2. { He was born a few months after the death of his father Abdullah, who died shortly after marrying his mother Amina. She died when he was six years old, and from thence onwards he was cared for by various relations.
3. {
4. {
5. { He was born about A.D. 570 in Mecca, a city of Arabia, situated some fifty miles inland from the Red Sea.
6. The Kaaba for which Mecca was famous at the time of Muhammad's birth was a rudely constructed idolatrous temple, containing a black stone venerated by the Arabs, to which pilgrimages were made from all parts of Arabia.
7. When Muhammad was a youth, he is credited with propriety of demeanour and purity of morals.
8. He suffered from a form of epilepsy.
9. In his younger days he undertook the important charge of convoying caravans to Syria and back.
10. The religious condition of Arabia at the time of Muhammad's birth was, generally speaking, superstitious and idolatrous. Heavenly bodies, idols, and stones were worshipped. Judaism and Christianity had but little influence on it.