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A table of contents for *Challenge and Counter-Challenge* can be found here:

https://missiology.org.uk/journal_challenge-and-counter-challenge-01.php

Challenge
and
Counter
Challenge



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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.

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EGYPT GENERAL MISSION

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What the



Garden said.

I WONDER if you like gardening? I do, and I spend a great deal of time alone in my garden. It is rather dull if there is no one to talk to for hours at a time, so I have got into the way of listening to what the garden has to say to me, and sometimes I talk back . . . not aloud of course, in case anyone should overhear. Our Lord Jesus told His disciples and others some of the lovely things the flowers and birds told Him : I expect you have read about them in the parables.

The other day I was doing a very dull job, one which I don't think anyone likes. I was weeding a lawn, and there were not even any flowers near it to talk to me. I was having a very boring time and getting more and more conscious of an aching back and lots and lots of lawn still to do. Presently I looked at the basket full of weeds I had taken out. There were such a lot that I couldn't help giving myself a pat on the back, so to speak, while I murmured, " Well, I have done a good job." Just then I heard a chuckling laugh. I looked around but there was no one there. The robin which had kept me company all winter was too busy building a nest to take any interest in my affairs, and my little neighbour Jennifer, aged two, who occasionally lends me a hand, had gone out with her mother. Who could it be who laughed?

I told myself I must have imagined it, and again looked complacently at my pile of weeds, when I heard quite a chorus of chuckles, coming right from the lawn where I was kneeling. I knelt forward to hear more clearly and I heard one cheeky little weed say to the others, " It's just too funny to see her so pleased about the things she has taken out ; she doesn't seem to realise that we who are left are the important ones." And of course when I thought it over, the little weeds were perfectly right. We like to judge our work by what we have done, but the real test is what we have left undone.

How many times have we tried to rid ourselves of bad habits? We have said, " I won't tell any lie : I won't use bad words : I won't lose my temper : I won't do this or that or the next thing," only to find that even if we have managed to do all we intended, lots of other wrong things have cropped up and we are really no better than we were. You see it's the things that are left behind that matter.

Of course it might be possible to take out every single weed from a little patch of lawn, though I have never managed to do it, but I am quite sure we can never get rid of every sin and bad habit by our own efforts. Only the Lord Jesus can do that for us, and He does it by giving us new hearts, made clean by His precious blood.

It was really this same lesson of the importance of what is left that the Lord taught His disciples one day in the temple. They were all watching the worshippers putting their gifts into the treasury. Some very rich men brought large gifts and the disciples were so impressed that they scarcely noticed a poor widow who timidly put in the smallest coin. But the Lord Jesus noticed her and said to the disciples, "She hath put in more than they all." You see, Jesus judges not by the amount people give but by the amount they have left after giving. The poor widow had given all she had, so she had nothing left, and therefore her gift was more precious than those of the rich men who had probably more left than they had ever given. Do you count the value of what you give to the Lord by the amount left?

The same lesson is taught by the trees in harvest time. How we love to have full baskets and of course we take them from the lowest branches. Then when we see the pile of fruit we are content with what we can reach easily and don't bother about the fruit still hanging from the top branches. That is what the Church has been doing all down the centuries in the harvest fields of the world. How we rejoice over the plentiful harvest which has been gathered in from the heathen lands; thousands and thousands of boys and girls in mission schools, learning daily of the Lord Jesus. But what of the Muslim children? Don't we say, "They are so difficult to reach!"—just like the apples on the topmost boughs—"and there are so many others ready to be gathered in?" Will not the Lord of the Harvest judge our success, not by the ones gathered in, but by the ones who are left? Remember the Lord's parable of the Lost Sheep: the Good Shepherd left the ninety and nine in the fold to go after the one in the wilderness. Does He not expect His followers to do the same?

B. Collinson.



Burden-Bearers.

"CARRY your bag, Miss?" sounds quite an English phrase, though not heard here so frequently today! Could I take you through the streets and markets of any town or village in Lebanon and Syria you would constantly hear (but of course in Arabic!) these words, or something like them. Everywhere you will see men and women, boys and girls carrying loads. Sometimes you can hardly tell if it be a man or a woman, so completely are they covered by the huge bundle of straw, or piles of kindling wood, piled on their head and roped to their body. Very often it is a poor Muslim woman



underneath this heavy load. But heavier still is the load of sorrow on her heart, for since her husband divorced her, she has had to part also with her beloved little son . . . the light of every Muslim woman's eyes. Muslim law decrees that he returns to his father.

But it is of a small section of the great army of burden-bearers about whom I want to tell you. We, who live in Beirut, call them the "porter-boys." There being no compulsory education in these lands, many parents send out their small sons to earn a few piastres . . . by fair means or foul . . . almost as soon as they can walk. For the most part they run the streets bare-footed, clad in filthy ragged clothes. Those who frequent the markets carry a tall basket, almost the height of the boy himself. Here he eagerly awaits the shopper, following a likely customer from shop to shop. If you succumb to his pleading charms all your goods are piled into his basket, then he deftly winds a long cord around the basket and around his head, and with a jerk he gets the basket on his back and trots off at a great pace !

Under the auspices of a certain organisation a large room has been obtained where these "porter-boys" can gather in the evenings when the day's work is done. Here some of the more enterprising learn to read and write their native tongue. Others play team-games organised by an efficient club-leader. They are medically examined regularly, and once a week those who attend consistently are given a good meal. Alas ! the rest of the week they exist largely by begging for food or stealing it.

Some Christians go to this club and give a Bible talk after the evening's games are over. There are few people who through the day have shown them any consideration, let alone love, for after all they are only beasts of burden to the majority: How almost unbelievable to their ears are those lovely words, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden."

Our Lord Jesus must have often seen small boys and older ones too, bowed beneath the weight of heavy burdens. He saw too, what we cannot, the burden of sin and shame on the heart. It was that great burden with which He was loaded, as He bare our sins in His own body on the tree. He is the great Burden Bearer and He calls those who follow in His steps to "bear one another's burdens." Will you share in prayer and sacrifice the burdens of those who know not the Burden Bearer ?

J. Wakefield
(*British Syrian Mission*).



Salsa, the Girl Martyr.

MANY, many centuries ago, while our British forefathers were still living in caves and knew little of the art of building, there were already towns of strength and beauty, with magnificent palaces and temples to be found in North Africa. The ruins of some of these towns, such as Carthage, can be seen to this day, and they bear the mark of the different religions which have held sway in that country. For the land was not always Muslim as now; at one time the people were pagans, worshipping idols; then Christianity was introduced by the Romans, and this in turn was swept utterly away when the Arabs conquered the land and brought it under the rule of Islam.



The Christians of those early days had no easy time; some were called to suffer persecution, and others even to give their lives for their beliefs. At Tipasa, some seventy miles along the coast from Algiers, built on the sheer cliffs overlooking the blue of the Mediterranean, there are to be seen the ruins of what must have been at one time an important township. It included a cathedral—of which some of the carved Roman pillars still remain—and also another smaller church. And with this little building is linked the name of Salsa, a girl, living in the fourth century who, in defiance of her pagan family, became a Christian.

Not only had she accepted Jesus Christ as her Lord and Saviour, but she had given Him also all the love and passionate loyalty of her young heart, and it was hard indeed for her to see her people worshipping, as they did, images made by man.

One day, when she was fourteen years old, an idol, in the image of a bronze dragon was set up, and all day and well into the night celebrations in its honour were carried on, with feasting and dancing and wild rioting. Salsa was a reluctant witness of the scene, for she was not allowed to stay away from the camp on the cliff that was its centre, and the horror of it all gripped her until she could scarce bear it.

At last, wearied by their orgy, the revellers, one by one, fell asleep; all but Salsa, who, burning with indignation and longing to show that she at least had no part in this idolatry, arose with a sudden determination, and creeping past the sleepers, seized the dragon's hideous head, wrenched it off and bore it to the cliff's edge, where she flung it over into the waters far below. Then, speeding back unnoticed, she next succeeded in dragging the heavy bronze body to the same spot. But her efforts must have disturbed the slumberers for as with a final gathering of her strength she sent it crashing down into the sea, the noise of its descent brought the populace rushing to the spot. Realising that their god had been dishonoured and assaulted, they were overcome with fury and fell upon Salsa, stoning her, piercing her with swords and trampling on her as she fell.

Finally they flung her body into the sea to follow that of the idol against which she had pitted her young strength and which, even by her very death, she had surely overcome. For her high courage and zeal for the cause of God could not but speak of Him Who had aroused it, and some time later the little Christian church was built upon the spot where she died, and engraved on an old stone in its chancel can be seen to this day the name of Salsa, the girl martyr.

"Pink knees" comes to the Middle East

SOON after I was commissioned in the Army, I found I had been put on a draft for service in the Middle East. The war had been over for about a year, and all the soldiering that I knew had been learned on barrack squares and in secluded training areas in various parts of England. So off I went as a brand new second lieutenant to see what all the fuss in the Middle East, that we had been reading of in the newspapers, was really about.



The journey out was very pleasant as we travelled by train across France, and got a ship at Marseilles that took us to Port Said at the Mediterranean end of the Suez Canal. This view of the Canal was the first of very many before we sailed for home again, for a high proportion of the men on that troopship were later stationed in the Canal Zone.

Needless to say, I was wide-eyed at what was going on all around. Ports always are, to me at any rate, fascinating places, and all the coming and going in Port Said harbour made it no exception. However, we were not left long to gaze at other people working, as a troop of piratical-looking dockers came on board to get the heavy kit on to the quay. The strength of these men has to be seen to be believed ; they would pick up heavy crates and trunks and cart them off with as little concern as we would a suitcase. The result was that it was not long before we were trampling through the sand at the back of the dock, round behind warehouses, over cables and through fences to the railway siding, where a train was waiting to take us to Cairo.

By this time we had left behind the small boys swimming in the dock for coins thrown to them by the troops. Those other traders, however, who had come out to us in small rowing boats filled with bananas and oranges, dates and turkish delight, handbags, sandals, wallets, silk scarves and all manner of gaudy wares, were ashore as soon as we were, and were plying their trade at closer quarters.

Something that struck those of us who were new to the East, was that many of these traders were quite young boys. Running about in bare feet all over the railway track, wearing just a pair of grimy shorts and a shirt, these youngsters would come trotting along by the train yelling at the tops of their voices. They had picked up a fair smattering of English from the thousands of troops who had been that way during the war, and they delighted to produce some of the coster cries they had been taught. " Cheap at half the price," they would tell their prospective customers as they displayed their cases of rings and trinkets. This, of course, bewildered us still further, but the persistent efforts of the smaller ones were frequently rewarded.

This sense of humour hiding behind the grubby face and ragged clothes, but betrayed by twinkling eyes, is continually showing itself, though one rather elderly greengrocer did not think it very funny when a few of us borrowed one of his water melons to play rugby with. But that took place in another part of Egypt much later on, and does not really come in here at all.



At last all the troops were on the train, all the kit was packed away, and all the hundred and one details settled, when the engine gave a hoot, and we were off on the way to Cairo. We travelled southward with the Nile Delta on our right and the Suez Canal on the left, through country that was sometimes sandy and barren, and at other times beautifully green and highly cultivated. The cotton crop was fairly advanced, and in the fields graceful white egrets could be seen feeding.

As the sun began to go down, we drew into the station of the town that has surely one of the crookedest names there is. If it had been called Zigzag that would have been twisty enough, but this town has gone better still and calls itself Zagazig. It is really quite a large and important town to

which the peasants from the surrounding countryside bring their produce for sale. We stopped there only long enough for everybody to have a drink, as we were not used to the hot sunshine that had beaten down on us throughout the afternoon. Even so, it was quite dark by the time we set off again, because of the shortness of the period of twilight.

We dozed off as best we could until we saw the lights of Cairo itself, and after much coming and going, hooting and shunting, we arrived at a siding near the transit camp in a suburb some distance from the centre of the city. After the sea voyage, and the railway journey of a hundred-and-fifty miles, we were glad enough to be shown our beds, and to wait and see what the morning would bring.

ALAN EAST (*All Nations' Bible College*).



A True Story.

SOME still remember how King Edward VII. was struck down on the eve of his coronation in June 1902. The arranged ceremonies were hastily converted into services of intercession for the king's recovery. A large congregation assembled in St. Paul's Cathedral, among them being a high native officer in the Indian Army. After the first prayer, this Muslim administrator remained kneeling. At the close he explained why he had not stood up, saying that he had been in a trance, and had seen One in white coming up the aisle blessing the people and saying, "The king will live."

Until his return to India, he kept part of his story to himself. Then he disclosed the rest to his own "Mullah" (sheikh) saying, "As He blessed the people I saw a pink scar in the centre of the palm of each hand. What were those scars?" The Mullah hedged, and merely said, "He must



have been throwing roses to His followers (an Indian custom), and thus pricked Himself." The officer was puzzled at this. Ultimately he visited a missionary and told him his story in detail. Of course the missionary explained that those scars were "the print of the nails in His hands."

The fine old officer exclaimed: "Then I have seen your Christ!"

A. T. UPSON (*From "The Christian"*).



HOW did you get on with the last Quiz ? Perhaps it would be better not to enquire too closely ! Well, here is another one, though in a slightly different form.

Can you attach one of the following eight words correctly to each of the statements underneath ?

GABRIEL. KOREISH. KHADIJA. MEDINA.
MOUNT HIRA. HEJIRA. QUR'AN. ABU BAKR.

1. A wealthy widow woman who was attracted by Muhammed's handsome appearance, and the propriety of his behaviour and who married him when he was twenty-five years old.

2. A peculiarly barren and dreary place where there was a cave to which Muhammed frequently retired for meditation.

3. The alleged oracles or messages from God which Muhammed claimed to have received, and which, although much is clothed in beautiful and even sublime language, is a "jumble of fact and fancy, laws and legends, prayers and imprecations."

4. The angel whose voice Muhammed is said to have heard during the times when he was in a kind of swoon or trance; although, from the doctrines he preached and the moral effects produced by the system which he founded, it would appear that he was really under the influence of evil spirits at these times.

5. One of Muhammed's earliest converts, a wealthy merchant of strong character, who later succeeded him as ruler.

6. The tribe to which Muhammed belonged in Arabia.

7. A city 250 miles north of Mecca to which Muhammed fled for refuge when driven out of his home town by the hostility of the people.

8. The name given to Muhammed's flight from Mecca, and from which the Muslimeen date their years as Christians date theirs from the birth of our Lord.

CORRECT ORDER OF WORDS.

1. Khadija. 2. Mount Hira. 3. Qur'an. 4. Gabriel. 5. Abu Bakr. 6. Koreish. 7. Medina. 8. Hejira.