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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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CHALLENGE AND COUNTER-CHALLENGE

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

Issued by the

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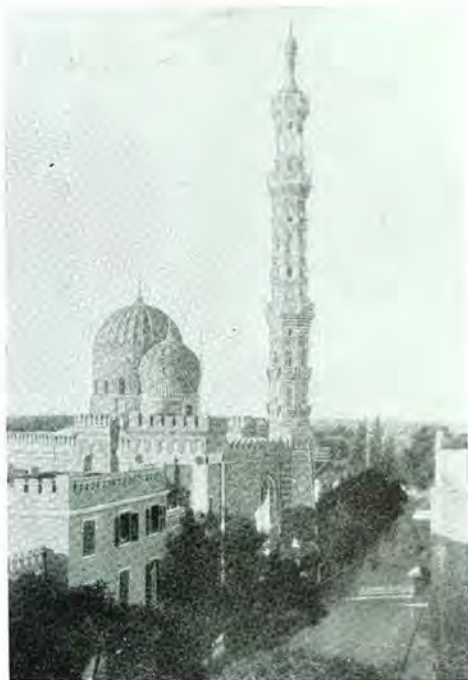
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The Muezzin

This is a peculiar word isn't it? First, let me tell you how to pronounce it. It has three parts, *Moo-ee-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.

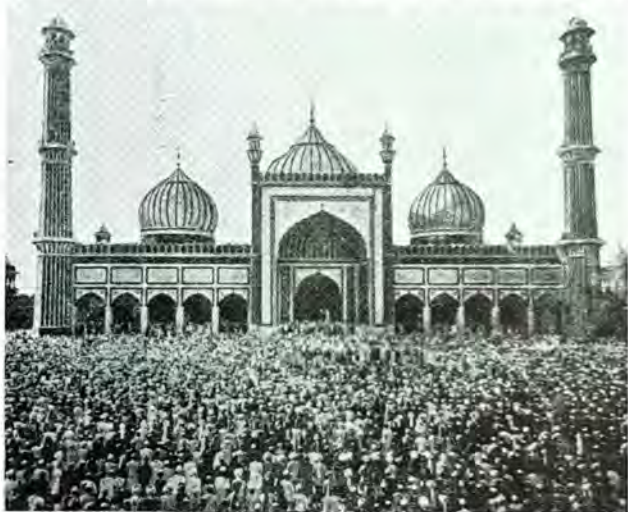
See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown ?

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 Saïd, the Silk Weaver

(Translation of an Arabic story).

There was in time past a man whose name was Saïd, 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 Saïd, because he was still young, and it seemed to the king that this treachery was none of his devising, and Saïd cried for mercy from the hand of the king. And the next morning the king called for him and said, "O Saïd, 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.

