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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

The following Societies co-operating:—

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CENTRAL ASIAN MISSION

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

CEYLON AND INDIA GENERAL MISSION

75, Mildmay Park, London, N.1.

EGYPT GENERAL MISSION

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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.

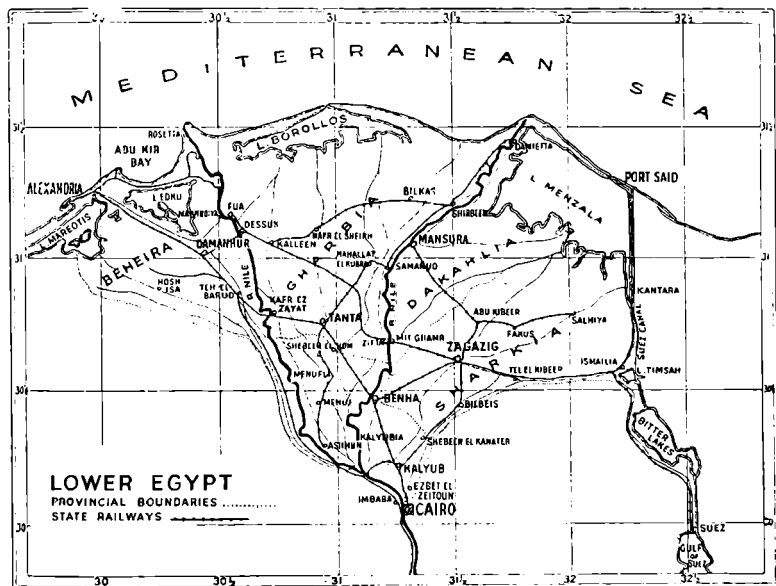
"My mother says that reading will only make me weaker, so she has taken away my New Testament and all other books," he explained rather awkwardly and sadly. We sought to comfort and encourage him during our necessarily short visit. We felt that light and darkness were struggling together for his soul.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

not already so definitely shone in his heart "to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ?" It had! And so we believe that when he passed away some weeks later, it was to see that Face and glory in the land of fadeless day. Hallelujah!

Raymond H. Joyce (China Inland Mission)

A Desert Journey.

If you look at the map of Egypt you will see that Alexandria is a large seaport, whilst Cairo, the capital of Egypt, stands on the Nile some distance from the sea. One may travel from Alexandria to Cairo by train, passing through the rich, agricultural land of the Delta, but there is a quicker way, by motorbus, along a road which crosses the most Eastern part of the Libyan desert.



(You can use this map to find places mentioned day by day in the newspaper)

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.

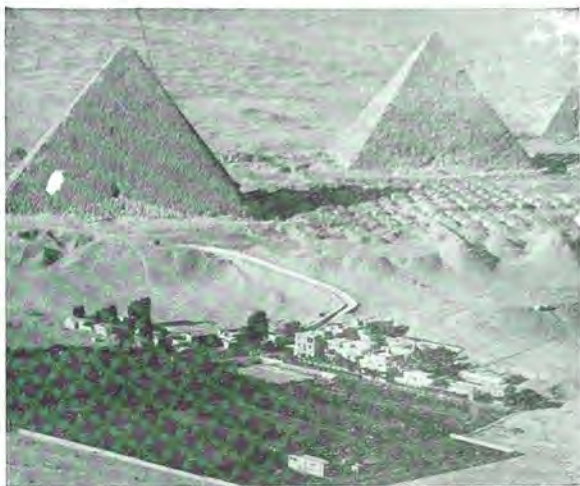
Worse still, one passes totally wrecked vehicles lying on the sand, which unwittingly left the good road, and skidding in the sand, overturned.

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*).

