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Challenge
and
Counter
Challenge

An illustration of two crossed flags. The flag on the left is green with a white crescent and star. The flag on the right is white with a red cross. The flags are crossed at their poles, which are dark brown. The text 'Challenge and Counter Challenge' is written in a green, cursive script over the flags.

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:—

ALGIERS MISSION BAND

c/o 37, Stephen's Road Tunbridge Wells.

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.

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 Peoples' Secretaries of any of the above Societies.

Subscription 2s. per year.

Valete

My dear Reader,

This letter brings some rather sad news . . . which is that the Magazine "Challenge and Counter Challenge" is having to close down! So this will be the last issue you will receive.

All who have been responsible for its publication do thank you, Readers, for all your help. Many of you have expressed such kind appreciation of the magazine which has been a great encouragement. You have done your best by paying your subscriptions regularly, and trying to increase the circulation by interesting others in it. But still the income on sales amounted only to 60% of the cost of the printer's bill. "For God's work we should 'cut our losses' once, twice, thrice . . . but not in perpetuity" saith the Treasurer!

We hope that it has fulfilled its aim during the three and a half years of its existence. This was that it should help you to love the Muslims for whom Christ died, and to pray more intelligently for their salvation. If this has been so, then its work will not stop with this number, but the fire it has kindled in your heart will continue to burn and find expression in more fervent prayers

"But," you may say, "what shall I do for up-to-date information? I like to pray for real and urgent needs. Fuel is needed to keep a fire burning really brightly."

You can write to the Society in which you are specially interested, who will gladly send you literature. And you can also link on as a full member of the Fellowship of Faith to the Moslems. Then you will receive a Prayer Cycle booklet, and an Occasional letter, full of news from various parts of the Muslim world. Address your application to:—

The Ass. Secretary, F.F.M.,
A. T. Upson, Esq.,
8, Queen's Road,
Rayleigh, Essex.

Yours in the Master's Service,

THE EDITOR.

The Robe of Er Rashid

They say that long ago there was a king who reigned over a mighty kingdom: and all parts of his kingdom were subject to his rule, save only one far-off province, and this was instigated by a traitor into rebellion.

Now the king sent many a proclamation of warning to this province, and all passed unheeded, and at last he sent his own son with one last message of mercy if the rebels would lay down their arms. But in place of this there rose a fresh revolt, and in the midst of it the king's son was slain. And as he died, instead of wishing vengeance on his enemies, his message to his home was to ask that his death might be accounted as their death and that for his sake forgiveness might be accorded to those who would submit themselves in his name, and that then the blood that he shed might not be without avail.

And the king, by reason of the love and sorrow and pity that filled his heart, gave his seal that it should be as his son had desired, and he sent a messenger to the distant province to call certain rebels to his capital, where they could be made to understand fully what had passed, and that they might, if they made their submission, be sent to their own land as ambassadors, to bring others to submit to him.

Now among the first who were summoned was a band of four men who were brought to the king's chief city. And his will was that they should remain a month, and at the end of that time should be brought before him to make their submission. And during the month they were to weave, each for himself, the jelab (a long tunic reaching from shoulder to ankle) in which to appear. Now this was no hard thing to them, for the great industry of their own land was weaving, and every lad learnt it in his father's house. And the order was given to the four, that because their plea for forgiveness was in the blood that the king's son had shed for them, therefore the robe on each one was to be white, with one broad crimson border around it.

So the four looms were set up, after the fashion of their country in the room where they lodged, and a mass of wool ready for weaving was brought to them—some of the deep crimson and the rest as white as milk.

And that evening the four sat in consultation on their mat under the arcade of their room, but the faces of three looked dark and displeased in the moonlight.

And the eldest of them, whose name was El Khrati (which means 'He who is out of the road') said to the others, "O, my brothers, it is well that we should weave new robes in which to appear before the king and to own to him our submission, that it beseemeth us to make them after the fashion of our own country. And in our country, as ye know, we never wear crimson of this colour—it is outside our road—let us dye this white wool to the colours that are usual among us, then we shall be as ourselves, and not like strangers, when we go to appear before him. And as for the crimson, we will leave it out and lay it outside, we do not need it." And two of the other men agreed with his speech, and they took the crimson wool and hid it in a chest that stood in a corner of the room; only the youngest, whose name was Er Rashid (which means 'He who is rightly directed') did not help them and was silent, and remained pondering in his heart.

Now the next morning the men rose early and began dividing the white wool into five heaps, according to the five colours that they proposed to dye it, that is to say, lemon and orange and green and blue and deep purple. But Er Rashid's face was pale, and withal he came forward with a strong heart and said, "Give me first my part of the white wool; I will not have it dyed; I am going to weave my robe as the king commanded me." And he went to the chest, and took with reverent hand his portion of the crimson wool from its hiding place.

And El Khrati and the two others were exceedingly angry and cursed him for a foreigner and a renegade; but they could not force him to yield his portion, so they carried their own white wool to the dyers, and brought it back in two days

time tinted to the colours of the Arch of the Prophet (that is the rainbow), save only the crimson, and set it up on their looms. And in the meantime Er Rashid had woven the deep crimson border, and was working at the pure white texture that followed, and he bore in patience day by day their sneers and provocations and contempt, that only increased upon him as time went on. And in some strange way their hatred did not seem to touch him now, for as he wove his robe his heart was filled with love to the Prince who had pleaded for him in his hour of death, and this love overflowed in its turn to those who were hating him, so that he answered their scoffs with silence or with gentle words.

And in due time came the day when the four were summoned to appear before the king; and the three elder men walked proudly through the streets in their jelabs of many colours, sure at heart that the king would be pleased that they had come to make their submission, and would notice the pains and skill they had displayed in the weaving of their garments. But the face of Er Rashid bore the look of one who sees things that are hidden from his brethren—and in truth with the eyes of his heart he saw nothing but the distant battlefield where the Prince lay dying, and pleading for him, and for his people; and this seemed to him more present than ever, now that he wore his robe that spoke of the precious blood that had been shed.

And as the four stood side by side in front of the crowd that filled the audience chamber, a curtain was lifted and the king came in. And he looked at the four with a look that seemed to read their hearts and he asked them, "Tell me, O my people, what is in your minds, as to this matter of the surrender of yourselves for which you have come from afar."

So El Khrati answered and said, "O king, we have no king but thee, and thy kingdom alone shall remain. We are in the way of those who may have been rightly directed, and we have woven ourselves robes of fair colours wherein to appear before thee; therefore do we account ourselves to be submitted unto thee."

But the king answered, "Of a truth if ye and the house of your fathers had kept in the past all the laws of the kingdom, then might this submission have sufficed. But have ye forgotten that ye have sinned grievously? I hear nothing in your words that makes mention of the past."

Then El Khrati answered and said, "Of a truth we know that we have sinned; but thou art the merciful and compassionate one, and to thee do we come for help."

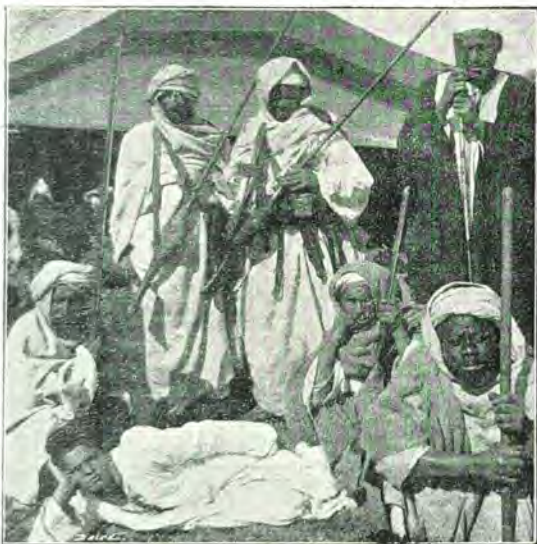
Then said the king, "My mercy and my compassion have chosen unto themselves a way in which the remembrance of your sin can be blotted out. It is through the blood that my son shed for your land. That blood cries to my heart for mercy, and not for vengeance. You may not understand how this can be, but I tell you that the only way that you can come boldly thus into my presence is by the way that he has opened for you in his dying. Had you of a truth submitted unto me, you would of necessity have appeared before me in the manner that I have commanded, and would have woven to yourselves the robes of crimson and white wherein to draw near. Where is then the submission of which we speak? I see neither the crimson nor the white save in the raiment of one of you"—and the king looked with love and tenderness at Er Rashid and said to him, "Speak, O my son."

And Er Rashid answered, "O my Lord the King, I have nought to say; I am unworthy to come before thee—look not on me—look on this crimson that I bring as my plea, and in thy great pity count my guilty past as the snowy whiteness for the sake of thy son's blood. And send me back to my land to tell my brethren of the mercy thou hast shown us through him."

And the king answered, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt, thou hast brought me the plea that is above every plea. Go back, with my authority to all who will submit at heart, and will take my way of mercy even as thou hast done." And then and there Er Rashid knelt before the king, and his face shone as the sun as he gave up his whole life to this new sacrifice, no matter what it might cost him.

But the other three stood by with looks of gloom and displeasure, and the king turned to them sadly and said, "I have offered you one way of mercy and I have no other to offer, and ye have added now to your sins this blackest sin of all, that ye have set at nought my son, and have trampled in your hearts on the blood that he shed for you. Your beautiful garments can avail you nothing, for there is in them no mention of that blood, and your submission is but in word, while ye refuse the mark of submission that I have appointed. You have failed in my test, You have sent your own punishment before your face, and it awaits you." And the king signed to his jailer to lead them away into the prison house till the day of judging should come.

From 'Story Parables' by I. L. Trotter.
[By kind permission of the Nile Mission Press].



Desert Tribesmen



R

Ramadan

This is the name of one of the months in the Muslim calendar. During this month you will often see people acting like the two in the picture. You can see that they are looking towards the horizon and longing for the sun to set. Beside them are two flat loaves of bread and a nice dish of stew, but they must not start to eat or drink until the sun has set.

This fast is one of the commands which Mohammed gave to his followers and most of them obey it implicitly. It is very hard to do this in the summer time when the peasants working in the fields may not have anything to eat or drink during the day, and at night they do not get much sleep because they have several meals then to try to make up for the fasting by day.

After eating and drinking from sunset till well after midnight, the people usually fall asleep, and then very early before the dawn, watchmen go round the streets with large noisy rattles which they shake with great gusto to wake folk up to have a meal before the fast begins again.

S

Sheikh



This man is a sheikh. You can tell this by the clothes he wears, but especially by his head dress. This consists of a little crimson felt cap with a blue tassel, and round it is wound a fine white linen scarf with a picot edging. Sometimes one sees a Sheikh wearing a green scarf round his head instead of a white one. This means that he is a direct descendant of the prophet Mohammed's old family, or that he has been on a pilgrimage to Mecca, in Arabia. His long coat is often made of rich silk material, and may be of any colour blue, purple or red. The underneath robe is usually of some bright striped material.

He has been trained at the Ashar University in Cairo for perhaps as many as twelve years. He is able to teach the Qur'an and explain it to people. He has also studied his own language, Arabic, and knows the grammar and composition of it very well.

So if ever you go to Egypt you may have a Sheikh like this to teach you how to read and write the Arabic language.



T

Tarboosh

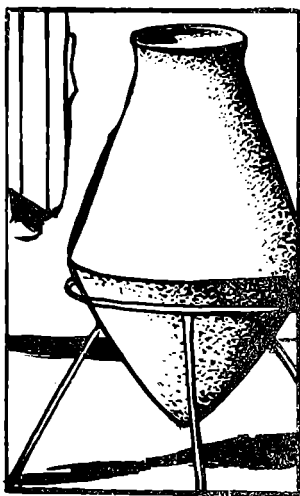
This is the name of the hat this boy is wearing. It is made of bright red felt and has a black tassel hanging down the back. This has been for some time the usual kind of head-gear to be worn in Egypt by all men and boys of the middle-classes, especially in the towns. There are special shops where they are made and where they can also be cleaned, ironed and reblocked if they get out of shape.

The policemen wear them and they add a nice touch of colour to their rather sombre navy winter uniforms. In the summer when it is very hot in Egypt the policemen wear white uniforms and then they are given white covers to put on top of their tarbooshes with a flap at the back to protect their necks from the sun. The soldiers, who wear khaki uniforms, are given khaki covers for their tarbooshes.

In England boys take their hats off in school, but in Egypt they keep them on indoors, and when they go to the mosque they keep their tarbooshes on but take their shoes off!

Z

Zeer



This funny-looking thing is called a **zeer**. It is a large vessel holding four or five gallons of water, and it is made of clay. It is porous, which means it is full of minute holes, so that the water is very gradually seeping through all the time. The outside is therefore damp to touch, and this prevents air getting in. So the water is kept cool in summer, as the hot air in the atmosphere cannot reach the water and heat it.

Then you will notice that the bottom of it is pointed, so that a bowl or other container can be put underneath to catch the drops which trickle down all the time.

Many people have zeers in their houses and they are also to be seen near railway stations, police stations and other places where people gather, so that they can slake their thirst.

I can assure you when the temperature begins to go above 100 degrees you get very thirsty and are most glad to have a nice cool drink.

“JENNIE” de Mayer of much loved memory

(obit May 3rd, 1951)

It was one afternoon in Jerusalem during the middle thirties that my wife came to my study (in the Newman School of Missions) and told me there was an elderly lady, named de Mayer, recently from Russia who did not seem quite English-speaking. “Jennie” had been talking Russian mostly for the previous eight years, though language with her quickly righted itself. In Jerusalem she wanted to study Arabic—she was one of our few students on the “seventy” line. Together we went to see her and I ventured the query, “Not the great Miss de Mayer?” “No,” she replied, “the very little one.” The story goes further back than that—to one Sunday in Cairo in the hot summer of 1916, when Mrs. Zwemer had invited me to lunch; and I met Dr. Zwemer in the lift on the way up to their flat. He had a postcard in his hand, which had found its way through to Cairo from somewhere in Central Asia. He waved it at me with the remark that it was from one of the most remarkable women he knew. She was Eugenie de Mayer, who after other forms of Christian work (which took her across Siberia), had lost her heart to the Muslim world. Had she not gone with the pilgrims to Jidda on two occasions as a Red Cross worker in Russian boats? In Central Asia she had become the friend of Uzbeks and others, of whom I knew next to nothing. “It is people like this,” added Dr. Zwemer, “whom it is worth while to pray for.”

From time to time Dr. Zwemer gave us news of “Jennie.” and then one day there came a letter with the news that on her return to Russia, she had been arrested and imprisoned—shut away as it transpired from Christian fellowship for nearly a decade. But her Christian witness continued unabated. It was not for nothing that she chose the **nom de plume** of **Shaheeda**. She was “witness” and “martyr” both rolled into one. A few months after she had grown acclimatized to social Christian comradeship in the Holy City she told her story to a group of praying friends.

Her worst experience was when for six months she **lived** on six foot of board in one room along with sixty women—and every misdemeanour of anyone was written down against the whole lot. “Jennie” said that she shuddered to think how her “crime sheet” must read, till suddenly she knew what vicarious punishment had meant to her Lord—just something of it—something that made all the difference then and afterwards, when she came to live in Jerusalem close to the Church of the Resurrection. Eugenie de Mayer was one of a family of six—her father Swedish, her mother with a double strain inherited from Germany and Holland. She and her two sisters were brought up in St. Petersburg (as it then was), and the trio lived to make their mark in the world. The eldest eventually became a doctor in Geneva. The youngest (Mrs. Sonia Howe) was married to an Irish clergyman, who ministered to British communities in several parts of the world.

How well we remember having breakfast in Paris with this sister. When Mrs. Howe heard of how “Jennie” was already comporting herself in Jerusalem, helping all and sundry, she told us that she had been doing that all her life. She was but six years old, when she found a mangy puppy in the streets of the Russian capital and gave it her own little bed—somewhat to the discomfiture of her parents, who were dining away from home and returned to find the future “Red Cross worker” doing her best to make the puppy feel comfortable! That was “Jennie” de Mayer all over.

For her declining, though not reclining, years, she lived in Canada (among the Mennonites when possible). Her letters went to missionary friends around the world, just as in prison she had “confounded” the authorities with her correspondence (sometimes accompanied by cheques) to lonely missionaries. She insisted on having her share in the last “Morris” we had in Palestine. During the Jerusalem days she lived mostly in the Muristan, close by the Uzbekis and other Central Asian pilgrims (they remained her first love), who not finding funds to make possible their return home had been settled in Jerusalem since before 1914 and lived in a **zawiya** or lodge of their own. “Jennie” lost no time in procuring tracts in their own

language, some of which were from her own pen. The world at large knows little of many of its "famous women" It was in human hearts that her influence resided; that was partly the reason why she suffered with the sufferings of stricken world. There were not only the lonely Uzbekis, whose faces lighted up, when she went to the Temple Area and found them on duty or passed their little stalls filled with laces, combs, and other small commodities. There was the Abyssinian boy, who was in trouble and had dived out of the porthole of a ship in Port Sudan, and eventually reached Jerusalem through Egypt, walking miles of the long route, and found his "friend"; or there was old Mrs. Einsler up in the eighties, who had lived in Jerusalem all her life, daughter of the Dr. Schick who made the models of the Temple (which delighted "Jennie") and located the Pool of Bethesda. Mrs. Einsler took her into her home and life and was the better for it.

Two things remain. There was the somewhat captivating way she had in talking—which sometimes peeped out in public-speaking—for when she was sure the other party would either do what she so much wanted or **must** agree with what she was about to say, she would preface it all with a confident, questioning "Yes," framed in a way that would not brook denial. More important, and so essential for those whose lives are spent on the Mission Field, where people do not always see eye to eye, "Jennie" seemed **intuitively** to realise that human goodness taught or caught in Christian living, was not confined as dogma is so often, for she recognised that where doctrinal gulfs were wide, there was no fissure in spiritual things; and where she sensed an underlying loyalty to the Person of the Lord, to the holder of that loyalty, through all vicissitudes, she remained unutterably loyal herself.

ERIC F. F. BISHOP,

The University, Glasgow.



A Bible in Syria

Near the centre of Damascus, that stronghold of Islam, the Bible Society were able to open a small shop some two years ago. A young man was placed in charge whose father had been won for Christ through the British Syrian Mission. Yusuf, too, was taught and trained by that Mission and now he is trusted with this wonderful opportunity of standing for his Master in a city where Satan is entrenched. The shop is



modern and attractive, and has a small room behind where conversations can be held with enquirers in private. These are sometimes started through passers-by being arrested by a poster displaying an open Bible on a black background with the simple words below it—**The way out of the dark.**

One day Yusif was sitting in the front part of the shop when he saw from the window two Moslem Sheikhs pointing at the shop, spitting on the ground and speaking to each other so angrily and loudly that people started to gather round them. The following is Yusif's own account of what happened next: "Fearing the consequences of such a gathering in front of the shop, I hurried out and invited the two Sheikhs in. As soon as they entered I asked them why they were so angry. They answered: 'Every pious Muslim should be like us when he sees that here, in the holy city of Damascus, there is a shop like yours with a big sign-board bearing the words **Holy Bible.** These words should not be displayed here.'

'If you say this,' I replied, 'you show that you are not respecting your own Koran and will be judged by God for this neglect.'

They grew even more angry and said, 'We shall see that a petition signed by all the Sheikhs of Damascus is presented to the Government, demanding the closing of this shop and the removal of this signboard, but . . . what do you mean by saying that we shall be judged for not observing our Koran?'

'I mean that your Koran mentions our Holy Book many times with the greatest respect, but you say that it is a bad thing and should be removed. What would be left of the Koran if you took away from it the words of our Holy Book? Don't you see that you are acting against your own religion by doing this?'

'Well,' continued one of them, 'Why don't you have your shop in the Christian quarter instead of having it here?'

'It is shameful to ask me this question,' I answered. 'When foreigners were masters of this land you were always saying that they divided us by creating among us religious fanaticism. Now the foreigner is no longer here, but you are feeding this fanaticism more than ever by what you are saying.'

Don't you know that we are all sons of the same beloved Syria, that we should live in peace together, and that each one of us is free to settle himself where he can work best? Don't you see that I am here in a quarter with a largely mixed population, composed of Germans, Italians, English, Americans, Armenians, Greeks, Arabs, Kurds, who will all buy my books? Or do you want me, in order to please you, to sell all sorts of bad books like the library over the street there, or to open a bar like my neighbour next door? To these people you dare not say anything, but when you see a shop selling holy books you become angry, you, Sheikhs of the religion, instead of helping me in this great task.'

They began to feel ashamed of themselves and one of them asked in a conciliatory tone: 'But why don't you sell the Koran as well if you sell all the holy books?'

'But nobody is allowed to touch the Koran except those who are circumcised! You know,' I added, 'that we Christians only believe in the circumcision of the heart. So how can you expect me to handle the Koran and sell it? You do not even want it to be sold but to be given away!'

Then they became very respectful, and even apologised for their former attitude, saying that we were indeed all brothers of the same country and that we should live together as such. My joy was great when two weeks later one of them came back and bought a copy of the Bible."

ELSA M. THOMSON,

British Syrian Mission.