ON THE WALL OF A MOORISH TOWN

Missionary Romance in Morocco

BY

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Foreword

I HAVE been asked to write a short Foreword to this most interesting volume, and I do so with pleasure.

In 1912, after a short pastorate in Newfoundland, the author joined the staff of the Southern Morocco Mission, of which he is now Field Superintendent.

After almost a quarter of a century's experience of Moorish ways, Mr. Haldane has been able to sink himself deeply into the mentality of those whom he has borne on his heart so long; and the keen insight of which this book is evidence will convey instruction even to many who already have some knowledge of this somewhat perplexing people, and will be of value to those who hope to enter on such a ministry in the near future.

During those 24 years Mr. Haldane has done much good work among men and boys; he has also itinerated widely among the villages and markets of Southern Morocco.

A car has been gifted by a friend of the Mission for Mr. Haldane's use, and he is now contemplating a special effort among the Berbers of the Atlas region. The ancestors of these Berbers were Christians.

This volume is likely to be helpful to many. I trust that it will have a wide circulation.

D. M. M'INTYRE.

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MISSIONARY ROMANCE IN MOROCCO

CHAPTER I

First Impressions after Landing

OUR ship lay anchored about three miles from the old Portuguese harbour of Mazagan in South Morocco. A rowing boat manned by natives came alongside of us and took off twenty passengers of mixed nationalities.

The first thing that struck me about these natives was the boisterous play they brought to bear upon trivial movements. The tightening of a rope, the placing of a seat, the fixing of a turban, were accompanied by vociferation and gestures that gave a hint of aggressiveness.

When we got ashore a crowd of porters and guides, who—as I now know—treat passengers from a British ship as a potential gold mine to be worked for their benefit, became as agitated as a nest of ants disturbed by an intruding beetle.

My knowledge of Arabic was confined to one word—ALLAH. As they handled our luggage and pushed one another about like angry bulls penned within a narrow enclosure, I could hear this Name pattering among their language like hailstones on a tin roof.

When I got out of port and into the streets, my attention was arrested by grinning camels, sturdy cactus plants, the smell of garments that had absorbed months of sweat, the mixed odour from burning censers, veiled women who goggled at the passing "Infidel," reclining men, whose features proclaimed the doctrine of fatalism as emphatically as if it had been written in bold print on their foreheads—these and many other things had the same effect upon me as my first visit to the circus.

In the afternoon I went out to see the town. How strange the narrow, demoralised streets seemed after my open-air life in Newfoundland! The place was riddled with culs-de-sac, and as I entered these unwittingly children took flight in terror. At the end of one of them there was a mosque, where, for the first time I saw, perched upon a minaret, a Muezzin, who had mounted to call the faithful to prayer.

I was struck by the strains of foreign blood

that had passed into the veins of these Arabs who, in their conquering march from their sandy plains to Sunset-Land, had carried, like a river passing through variegated soil, the colour and physical characteristics of many nations.

I was puzzled to understand how the people made a livelihood. There were hundreds of curious little shops that looked like oblong boxes standing on end with the lid removed. Some of the shopkeepers sat cross-legged on the floor flicking away flies; but most of them were reclining and some were dozing. All along the street people were lying about as if their chief occupation was to "sleep out this great gap of time."

The impact of civilisation had not reached this place. It was like a pond with the scum of centuries floating upon its surface. I found it difficult to believe I was mingling with the descendants of an imperial race whose conquests stretched from Delhi to Morocco, who dominated Spain for seven centuries, crossed the Pyrenees to invade France, and led Europe in science, philosophy and arts. But such was the fact. Here they lay around me like broken fragments hurled from their eminence. This

was my first visit to a foreign land, and it seemed to me then that any attempt to raise these people to a higher form of existence would be as hopeless as "sending precepts to leviathan to come ashore."

When darkness fell I was seized with a feeling of eeriness. Groups of men were sitting about the streets, dazed with inhaling the smoke of Indian hemp, snarling at one another as they played cards. In the open square some tribesmen were dancing themselves into a frenzy, while their partners, with wind instruments and crude stringed fiddles, urged them on to wilder and faster excitement. Here and there among the crowd of spectators, women, whom divorce had freed from the hampering restrictions of the harem, with silver jewellery clanging about their breasts, clapped their hands and threw off from their curled tongues quivering sounds that could not be set to any music. Beggars were sucked into this eddy of excitement where they were buffeted about by the dancers who were now barely conscious of their own movements.

When I reached my lodging I felt queer. Had I made a mistake in coming to this land? How could I, after living among fogs and hardy

fishermen, ever adjust myself to the sordid conditions of my new surroundings?

The following day I began my journey towards the interior. I rode a horse, while the two men who were to conduct me, both black as coal, rode mules on which, also, was carried my tent and other impedimenta necessary to a European traveller in a strange land. During the course of the day's travel we passed hundreds of villages of the conical straw hut type. After sunset we pitched tent inside the thorny hedge surrounding one of these.

Sleep was impossible. Every hut seemed to have a dog on night duty which kept up incessant snarling and barking throughout the night. But my worst enemies were the fleas. They attacked in swarms, and kept up a constant march over my body until I rose in the morning and shook my pyjamas. For four days I saw little but brown earth and demoralised villages where the slogan of life seemed to be, "Fumble through."

I had come to the country to offer these people eternal life, and my first impression was that they were not worth it! They resembled an excrescence ripe for the knife. My destination was Marrakesh, and on the evening of

the fourth day after leaving the coast, we entered the city by the Thursday Gate. From St. John's, Newfoundland, to Marrakesh, Morocco, was a change that made me feel more than strange.

The distance from the gate to the house where I was to stay was about a mile, and during that bit of my journey I saw strange things. Men and women lay about everywhere like bundles of rags ready to be carted away. Veiled women shuffled along as if they had a millennium to reach their destination. Children, with diseased heads and eyes, rolled in dust some inches deep. Both sides of the streets were lined with shops. Here one is oozing with olive oil, in another a man is sitting cross-legged tipping a dozen sweet potatoes into an attractive pose. The next one is empty, sold out evidently, its owner leaning over the counter, staring at the blank wall in front of him with the seriousness of one seeking to penetrate eternity. Everywhere beggars. Then a group of minstrels followed by a crowd, while a rich man displays his superiority by threading his way through the crowd with lowered eyes.

The impression I had as I moved through these streets was as if I were winding my way

through a series of intricate drains cut deep into the ground where a strange people lived, who had never climbed to the earth's surface to see, understand, and imitate the world of people living there. And now, here is our street. Its entrance is arched, has a heavy door, is about fifty yards long and resembles a mysterious passage leading to an eerie abode of fairies or dwarfs. Here I was to spend two years, mostly in the study of Arabic.

That experience lies behind me at a distance of nearly a quarter of a century. What follows in this book is a narrative of experience and conversations which have taken place in the intervening period as I have travelled and worked for the Kingdom of God among the Arabs of Morocco.

CHAPTER II

Preliminary to the Gospel

FROM the time the Arabs conquered North Africa no appeal has been made to the outside world for Christian teachers. The reason for this attitude is obvious: the adherents of Islam consider that the Koran is the final and highest revelation God has made to man, and that, in consequence, their religion is the only one efficacious for emancipation and eternal life. The Christian missionary, therefore, is treated as an intruder, and has to meet the people in their entrenched position of considered superiority.

The Arabs of Morocco are, as I have learned from experience, masters in the use of a strategy that keeps the missionary on the periphery of their stronghold, and too often we put down to ignorance or indifference what is in reality a calculated move to block our progress. They know how to feign interest when it suits their purpose, how to remain stolid without a quiver

of response when they deem such an attitude effective, and if they find themselves in a corner will inveigle one into a discussion on some side issue to draw away attention from their lapse in logic.

Here is an incident that gives point to these remarks. One day I found myself sipping coffee with a number of simple, ingenuous peasants, at least, so they appeared to be. They seemed so approachable that I at once introduced my Gospel. The intelligent, interested, but impassive faces of this group of men encouraged me. Then, when I was just getting to the heart of my message, one man suddenly leaned forward and said, with a great show of earnestness: "What is the official price of carrots in your town?" This man had heard the Gospel from my lips on a previous occasion, and his question was timed to cut in at the point where he knew I was to introduce the atoning death of our Lord.

What follows in this chapter is not a fanciful narrative to amuse readers, but actual experiences one passes through almost every day. We would like to be able to enter villages, gather the people and start right away with the Gospel. That we sometimes do, but more

often we have to thread our way through a lot of waggery and nonsense before we get a start, not to mention interruptions before we are finished.

On one occasion, after I had been preaching for a few minutes to a group of men, one of them informed me it was no good going on, because they did not understand English language. It was simply a polite way of telling me that they had no use for my Gospel. I put my hand in my pocket and said: "How many in this group would like a dollar?" They all put out their hands and pressed around me. "You don't understand what I said?" I suggested. "Oh, yes, we do." Then cries of "dollars." "Now, listen. Five francs make a dollar. There are twenty-two people in this group and if I give you a dollar each that will run into one hundred and ten francs. Now, I want to be sure you understand me." Then, singling out a man I asked him to repeat what I had said. Away he went with a rush: "Five francs make a dollar, etc." "Now I am not going to give you any money for I have none to spare." "Why, then, did you mention money?" asked one, in a tone that revealed his annoyance. "To prove to you that when

it is something you are really interested in you understand perfectly what I say in Arabic." "Aber beena" (he got the better of us that time), whispered one to his neighbour.

We begin again, and after speaking of the barrenness of their lives remind them that just as the rain cometh down from Heaven and causeth the earth to bud and blossom, so God by His grace can make our lives fruitful. "You Europeans are infidels," says an old man, beginning to put forth the feelers of his fanaticism. "How's that?" I ask. "Because as the rain cometh down from Heaven you put up umbrellas to turn off Allah's baraka." "You Arabs are infidels," I retort, "for when Allah sends His scorching sun you take shelter in huts or under the shade of trees."

"Well, go on" (awa zeed). With this bit of encouragement we proceed to tell them how Jesus came to ransom a lost world, adding that the prophets had foretold this event long before it came to pass. The mention of prophets drew a question, one I have been asked a thousand times: "How many prophets have come into the world?" When I profess ignorance several voices shout the answer: "24,000." "Well, if anyone will rattle off the names of

these 24,000 prophets I will give him the hundred and ten francs previously mentioned."

We pick up the threads where we left off, and go on again. As we speak one man is squeezing matter from a sore in his leg. The wound is black with cow's dung, which has been applied as medicine. No one takes any notice of him until it suddenly occurs to him that I might have medicine in my knapsack. "This leg won't heal," he says, "perhaps you have medicine which Allah could use to cure it?" "If you want an immediate cure for that leg have it taken off and put a wooden one in its place." This reply provokes laughter, but it also brings our friend to attention and saves me the trouble of looking at a lot of other wounds and scars, for on the mention of medicine the others began to pull up their clothes and show their diseases.

After these preliminary wanderings in waggery, I pulled out my watch and placed it on the ground. "Now I must soon be going, but before taking my departure I want you to give me fifteen minutes of uninterrupted silence so that I may tell you the good news I have brought for your benefit." "Allah," says one, pointing to the sun, "is the great watchmaker."

The old man already referred to saw in my request a move to open the way for an attack on Islam. He immediately employed strategy to defeat this end. "What is your opinion of Islam?" he asked. He expected me to run down their religion, call their Prophet bad names, and so provide him with a reason to call his co-religionists to champion their cause. "Repeat your question please," I demanded. "What is your opinion of Islam?" he replied with the manifest glee of one who watches his victim sniff around the trap. Making a sweep with my hand to draw attention to the fields around us I replied: "My opinion of the value of this farm is decided by the crops it produces. Now, you know Islam better than I do, please answer your own question. Are the fruits of Islam good?"

That was the last interruption. The time and silence requested were granted, and I trust that in that last fifteen minutes they had a vision of the love of Him Who bore their sins at Calvary.

CHAPTER III

Allah!

IT is no exaggeration to say that the word "ALLAH" is as much in use to-day in colloquial Arabic as is the definite article in English, or Oui in French. "Mention the name of Allah often, lest you forget Him," is a Koranic injunction to the faithful which has been carried out down through the ages with the driving force of Moslem fanaticism.

In spite of the fact that the basic confession of Judaism, "Hear, oh Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," is exactly the same as that of Mohammedanism: "There is no God but God"; or that of Christianity, which declares: "There is one God and one only," there is a chasm of difference in the conception of God raised by Islam and that of the two earlier religions. If the Moslem confession: "There is no God but God," is the foundation of faith, second in importance only is the other half of the creed: "and Mohammed is His

Prophet." It is by this latter part of its creed that Islam has cut itself away from every other religion of the world as definitely as the fish of the sea are divided from the fowls of the air. The mere confession of the Oneness of God which characterises Judaism and Christianity, is considered to be no more efficacious for salvation than the resolve of a man to land on his feet after toppling over a precipice into mid-air. It is, to use one of their own metaphors, like attaching a strong rope to a pole and then leaving it to lie uselessly on the ground for lack of another fixture to which it could be tied.

To the Moslem, the existence of God is piercingly plain. He would literally find it easier to doubt his own existence than that of God. He looks out upon the world of men, sucked into the eddy of philosophic speculation, religious doubt, and atheism, and in view of manifestations of the Almighty, which to his mind are as clear as crystal, concludes that in His sovereignty He must have blinded their spiritual vision.

Amid all the labyrinth of wild guesses about the origin of the universe, the ceaseless poking at the apparent contradictions of divine Provi-

dence, the puzzlements of man's origin and the outcome of all his restless activities, the Arab offers one word of explanation—ALLAH! That is all, but to him it is all-sufficient.

The earth quakes: Allah shook it! Why guess at secondary causes when the first holds out a full explanation? Why did He shake it and so cause so much suffering? How does the Arab answer that question? Like this: Imagine a thousand ants that had escaped the destruction caused by the farmer's plough, crawling up his back and shouting into his ear, "Tyrant! See what you have done." It is the duty of the servants of God to submit to His sovereignty not to question it. Why waste time trying to unravel life's complications? Challenge them all with one word, and then submit, muted. Allah!

The name of Allah is potent for blessing or cursing as the need arises. The equivalent of "thank you," is "God bless you." This is expanded into various forms such as, "May God give you health." "Good night," is "May God give you to spend the night in welfare." The mention of a child's name is hailed with "Blessed be God." Travellers greet workers in the field with "May God be

your Helper." The slaughter of an animal is preceded by, "In the Name of God."

A curse is quite ineffective unless uttered in Allah's name. If a man's ancestors are to be burnt, as one of their curses indicate, God is requested to do it. To avenge a wrong He is expected to smite an enemy with blindness. When a man opens a shop he does so "With Allah." If a man is hurt or killed in an accident it is "What Allah wishes." When a man gets up to stretch his legs after being long in a sitting posture the exercise is accompanied with groans of "Allah! Allah!" A dirge, sung in a funeral procession, by one of the sects, is composed largely of God's Name.

"Exalted be Allah, praise be to Allah. There is no God but Allah. Allah is Great! There is no power nor might but by Allah."

It is strange indeed, that this people, who make their boast in God, proclaim His greatness, and make such ostentatious a show of submission to His Will, see nothing incongruous in spending (to put it bluntly) most of their time in the devil's territory. They will devote an hour of panegyric in exalting "Tarek Ilmostakema" (the straight way), and descend immediately afterwards unabashed and

without any feeling of inconsistency, to levels of evil which are in glaring opposition to the nature of God. Blessing and blasphemy are familiarly entwined. Sublimity and swagger walk arm in arm as the man addresses himself to the Almighty. It is as if one should bow in fear and trembling at a sultan's stool, and then when retiring, shout at him: "Bless my friend, Si Mohammed, and curse those who oppose me. And don't forget I am opening a shop, and later will be embarking upon a risky enterprise and must have your help." If a European asks (as I have frequently done) for an explanation of this peculiar behaviour, he is quashed with a quibble: "In refusing to accept Moulay Mohammed and his claims, Christians forfeit the capacity to understand the working of God's will."

The answer shows that a pious exhibition of religion, not accompanied by a corresponding ethical standard, must support itself by silence or a sneer.

Students of the Koran, however, are not surprised at this extraordinary blending. Mohammed believed in the Greatness of God, and before the Majesty of His Being prostrated himself in worship. But he seemed to think

he had a right to link God to all his enterprises, wholesome, whimsical, or revengeful. He imagined that God would, at his request, pour boiling water down the throats of certain people, or fork them into the flames, for no other reason than that they would not accept his dictatorship in religious matters. He not only thundered against idolaters; he called upon God to wipe out communities of Christians because they would not add to their faith his whims and fancies.

His own fetish was favouritism. So, on the heels of this thundering march of curses, comes mercy, pardon, and the deliciousness of Paradise for all who believe in him and his mission.

When one remembers how fully the Arabs have absorbed the contents of the Koran, it is not surprising to see its dominant features reproduced in their own lives.

CHAPTER IV

Embarek, the Philosopher

EMBAREK spends his days reading and thinking. He is bold, and fires off his thoughts like bullets from a rifle. He is like a man sitting on a mountain top, satisfied with himself, watching a weary world struggling below for the very things he despises. The silly, mendicant multitude of the notabilities, the worries of the would-be-rich, the hypocrisy of the Fakirs, the superstitions of the ignorant, the crowd gulping down the gossip of those who are out to fleece them—these are the people who call forth his cynicism while he sits upon his perch, pluming himself on his philosophical aloofness and superior view of life. For the crowd, with its empty soul and caducous externals, he has nothing but contempt.

His philosophy has many outlets, and is not always consistent. It is epitomised in these words which he often quotes. "La tkhizen la thizen." (No banking, no banefulness).

But listen to his comments on the words; they are enlightening. "The man who has numerous wives and many children has many funerals to follow. The woman who bedizens herself with gold bangles runs risks of being carried off and stripped. The grain merchant who has bought large stocks must watch the face of the sky because a favourable change of weather may bring prices tumbling down and make him bankrupt. The poor need no palisade, for the thief does not prowl in their direction; the wealthy must build sturdy walls and employ sturdy watchmen. Those who store riches must fight the rogues."

Civilised life does not appeal to him, and he stems its encroachments towards himself as far as he can. For him the good and great things of life do not come by modern innovations, but by contact with the Ancients. This belief he expresses in the words: "La tibada, itabaa." (Imitate, don't originate). "Look," he cries, "at the life you have introduced to our country from Europe! What does it contain? Riches and roguery! These two converging forces have created a current in which our people are being whirled round and round in a mad dance." "Now, a word about

its benefits," I suggested. "Benefits! Paint! That, and little more."

Embarek does not accept work for himself, believing as he does that God has given him a mind which must busy itself with wisdom. But he knows somebody must work to keep the world going, and he has his advice ready for those who are not convinced on this matter. One day, when I was reading with him in his room, a man called and asked for alms. He was young and strong, and should have been working to earn his livelihood. "What do you want?" queried Embarek impatiently. "An alms, in the Name of the Lord?" came the reply in a peevish tone. "Herik wa rizik" (sustenance by shaking), said Embarek, at the same time making a gesture that revealed his annoyance. Then this bit of advice: "You are young and strong. Why should you lie at the foot of a wall and wail for bread? Daily sustenance demands sweat. Be off, and may God make your path smooth."

One day, when we were walking down the street together, he stopped and whispered: "Ilhaleeb, Ilhabeeb." I knew the words (milk, friends) but could not understand what they were intended to convey to me in this

conjunction and connection. He perceived I did not come by their meaning. "This street is full of men," he explained, "who bow to other men and call them by precious names. It is the art they employ to work them into a mood suitable to favour a loan of money, or other advantage. It does not matter who or what they are; produce the milk and the suckers will say, 'Beloved.'" He paused, to give a furtive glance this way and that, evidently to impress me. And then he proceeded: "These borrowers know that 'give me' must be oiled with 'I give.' Look! One has brought a jar of butter, another a fowl, and these small gifts are backed by bowing and high-sounding titles of 'My Lord.'" He was referring to the custom, prevalent in Morocco, of making a small present, accompanied by a show of submission, to the person of whom one is about to ask a big favour. A man called at our house one day, presented two fowls, then called the next day and asked us to give him in marriage a girl who had been brought up with us in our home. This custom is admirably elucidated in the saying: "Herewith a present by donkey, please return it by horse."

Embarek never learned a trade, but he

believes that, for all but a few select souls like himself, it is a blessing to have one. He puts it this way: "Shatera ihisn min shakara," which means that it is better to have a trade which is one's permanent possession, than a bag of gold which may be squandered, lost or stolen.

One day, when two men quarrelled and came to blows, a policeman appeared and led them to the police station. On my way home I was passing Embarek's abode and mentioned this incident which I had just witnessed. "Leave them, leave them," he said sorrowfully, "they will learn more wisdom in prison than in the street." "What would you do," I asked, "to defend yourself in threatening circumstances?" He was at no loss for a reply: "Himmer aaineek erbat yideek." Literally, redden your eyes and tie up your hands. In other words, look fierce at your enemy, but measure the consequences before you strike. This attitude before an aggressor he can act to a nicety, and on this occasion I could not restrain laughter as he stood up to show me how it is done.

"Suli wa sal," is often on his lips. The words embody a principle which he works

THE AUTHOR WITH HIS BIBLE CLASS OF MOORISH BOYS

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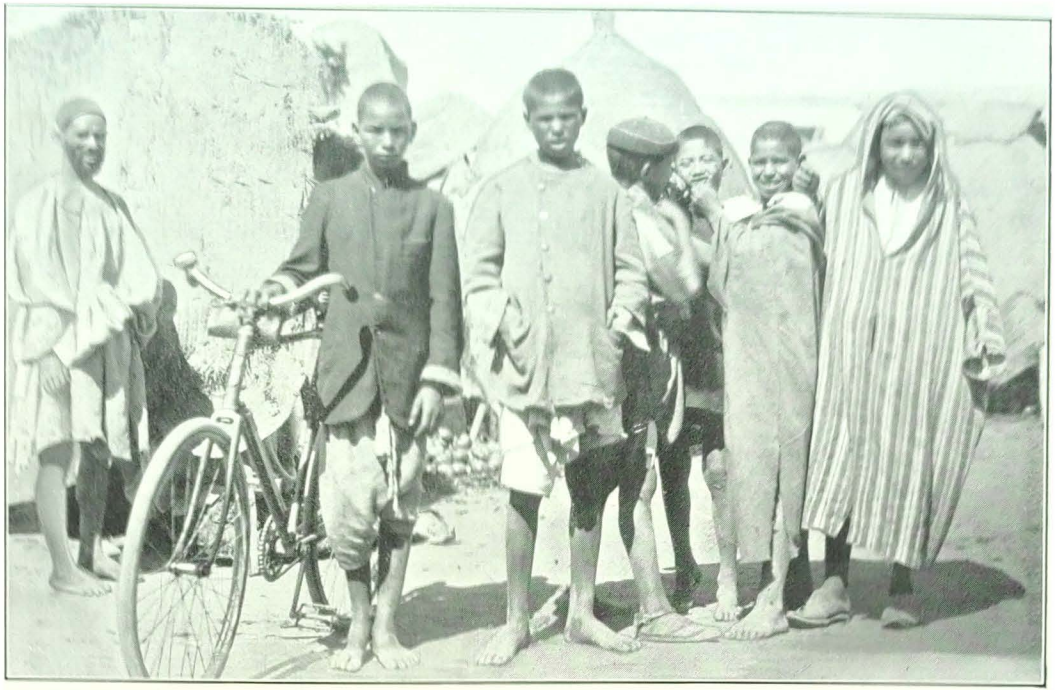


A GROUP OF VILLAGE LADS

out like this: When the big things of life are within your reach don't rush to snatch at them, for if you do they will turn into a mirage. The first thing to do is not to grab, but find out what conditions must be fulfilled to make the boon permanently yours. Pray, but first of all investigate the conditions which must be fulfilled to make the exercise effectual.

Embarek sees the world as a sphere of trickery where men, who have ambitions to realise and purposes to fulfil, will do strange things to attain their objectives. Therefore we must be cautious: "If you have doubts turn the dish." This refers to poisoning. If you are not sure of the friendship of your host turn the dish of food round and round and let him eat first. "There are many pretences of friendship," comments Embarek, "which contain hidden poison. Therefore, don't rush to embrace offers of friendship, but turn it round and round until you have made sure of its motives and end."

What is this man's attitude towards Christianity? Some years ago I persuaded him to accept and read the New Testament along with some other Christian literature. He read the books, but some months later, when he was

annoyed with me about something, he asked me to take all the books back. But he got over that mood, and since then has received a Bible and other literature. I came across him suddenly the other day in a cul-de-sac, where I found him reading the Gospel.

"Some of us are hoping and praying that you will become a real Christian, and the way to that end is pointed out in the book in your hand," I said. "Well," he said, "I am a Christian, but we need not cover the ground we have tramped over so often in the past. I believe in Jesus Christ, but I don't understand Paul. All those parables of Jesus, and this incident I am reading now, 'let him that is without sin cast the first stone,' find a place in my heart at once; but Paul's 'Heavenly places,' and the book at the end with its famines and Heavenly phenomena—these don't touch me. So I will follow Jesus as I would a road I know, and leave these others as I would paths I don't feel inviting. We must have patience and wait for God to open up our way."

CHAPTER V

Boys and Bible Stories

"I AM not going to do any preaching to-night, boys. For some months, now, I have been telling you Bible Stories, and by this time some of you should know these well enough to repeat them. I have some toys, sent me by a friend in England, and I am going to give prizes to the boys who will repeat correctly any Scripture story."

This announcement brought a show of hands and shouts of, "I can do it." When order was restored, I called a boy forward, set him with his face to the class, and asked him to proceed. The position in front of the class was too much for him, and after a few sentences he collapsed under his own shyness. He requested to be allowed to pull the hood of his upper garment over his head. This was granted. There he stood, like a cowled monk, muttering patchy sentences about a bear that came out of a wood and tore to pieces some naughty boys. He was

a failure. Some boys who are quite normal when in a crowd, become very embarrassed and look silly when they become a focus point for all eyes.

After the cowled boy I call forward Bilkassem, a lad very much alert, though somewhat spoilt by an exaggerated sense of his own importance. He announced the Prodigal Son for his theme: "A farmer had two sons, one big, the other small. The small one was a son of rascality (wold, ilharam) and wished to inherit his portion before his father was dead. That shows he was no good. All right. Anyway, his father gave him his portion, and he travelled until there was no place left he did not travel to. But he was a fool. How was that? All right." (It should be noted that "all right," wkha, in Arabic, is brought in, not because it is related to the narrative, but to give a breathing space to remember what follows). "Because he gathered a lot of youths around him and only God knows how much he spent on them. Until one morning he got up. All right. He put his hand in his sharaka to get a coin, and lo! it was empty. May Allah preserve us!" (That bit of oratory at the end threw him off the track and compelled

him to throw in three "all rights" to catch up his connection).

"Poor thing! nobody would give him to eat. No money, no friends. But that is just as God wishes. So he gets a job to feed swine —swine flesh is unlawful for us. May God deliver us from it!" (These side comments always trip him up, and "all right" had to be used again with several little coughs between). "At last he said to himself: 'Why am I feeding swine and starving when my father ploughs with many yokes of oxen?' So he left his evil job and journeyed home. And see the father's love! Every day from the time his son left home he looked for his return. And now here he comes. The father knows him at a distance and lets the shooting go: 'Here comes my son! Praise be to the Highest Who has brought him back!' What a feast there was that day! Only God can count how many basins of cooscoosou were eaten with the fatted calf. But the poor boy was ashamed, and hung his head, asking only for mercy. His father forgave him all his sins, and then all the servants came forward and gave him the kiss of welcome. And the meaning of all this? (Ilmaana had ilkilam?) We have all gone to

the far country of sin. Who in our town is without sin? Anyone? Speak. No! But there is mercy from God if we repent and come back. And don't forget all this is by Jesus the Son of Mary."

Having finished his story he looked at me with a facial expression that seemed to say: "You need go no further; nothing will beat that."

The next boy that came forward provoked a snigger in the class by his preliminary effort to strike a suitable pose before beginning. He did not feel he could face up to the class, and having no hood to his garment asked if he might tell his story with his back to the class. In this attitude he told the story of the two builders:

"Two men began to build a house. As God wished it should be, one was wise and the other foolish. The fool was in a hurry and did not stay to bother about foundations. Up, up went the building, on went the roof and then the white-wash. His house was finished and he was dwelling in it while his neighbour was still busy with the foundations. Says he proudly: 'See how Allah favours some and encumbers others; but who can reverse His planning?

Here am I with my wife and family comfortably housed, while my neighbour is just beginning. I have built my house for less than it is costing him to begin his.' All right.

"The other builder pretended to be very meek and ignorant, but all the same he knew what he was doing. When his neighbour teased him he just replied: 'Ah, well, God loves patient people, but good luck to you my lord, and blessed be God for your new house.'

"But all things are in God's hands, all by His permission, and then a storm. Down came swollen rivers, great rain and an evil hurricane. Oh, I forgot to say that before this storm came the slow man had finished his house and was dwelling in it. It struck the two houses with—just like the sea did, you remember, when it broke over the wall and invaded the municipal buildings and carried away all the bathing huts. The house without the foundation was wrecked, but the other remained intact. All right. What is the meaning of all this? If we play at cards" ("like you," said a whispering voice); "steal eggs from our father's house, and sell them to buy cigarettes" ("he's narrating his own deeds," interjected another voice); "and curse

one another's ancestors, we are building on sand. But if we do like 'Missyou Aldane' tells us, and give Sheetan distance, we have foundations."

He finished his parable with a protest: "If there had not been those interruptions I could have done better at the end."

A boy with an axe-like face was now gesticulating furiously to have his turn. Forward he came. No hoods or backs to class for him. He dived into his subject and rushed through it as if the first prize had been promised to the boy who could get the most words into a minute. To know how he did it you should read what follows almost without stopping to take breath, and without paying attention to punctuation:

"A man became very bad, and so God said: 'I will destroy all of them.'" (He must have been debating in his mind whether to tell the story of the Ark or that of Jonah, and so got mixed up between the two, as we shall see). "This He was to do by a great flood. But God is very merciful and He said: 'Why should I destroy all the people? they may yet repent.' He sent a prophet to warn them, but they loved the works of Sheetan and did not repent. So

the flood came and destroyed all but Seedna Noch (Noah) who had built a big ship into which he entered with his wife, sons and relatives; and the prophet who called the people to repent was saved in the belly of a great fish. Everything is easy to God. But the prophet did not like to see God having mercy on the people, so he began to scowl and sulk and then ran away and became a sailor." (Laughter up to this point had been suppressed, but now became open and loud). The boy saw that he had got into a hopeless tangle and that no bluff could get him out of his difficulties. So he returned to his place and took part in the laughter against himself.

Here is the next story: "A prophet was going in the way of God until he met some boys." (This lad is one of the steady type, and tells his story without changing his voice up or down, and without any gestures). "These boys were all sons of rascality, and instead of listening to his message from God they called him names. Now, this prophet had a diseased head, and his hair had withered away." ("Like that boy there," I heard some one say. "Me?" queried the object of contempt. "You wait till we get outside!"). "The boys were

ready for mischief and wanted to be chased, 'Go up amjod, go up amjod, (bald head) they shouted at him. Now, this man of God wanted to return good words for their bad ones and say to them: 'May God have mercy on your parents,' but they would not stop annoying him, so he said to them in the Name of the Lord: 'May God curse your ancestors.' Then they teased him more. But God does not let boys off without punishment when they tease old men. Then out of the wood came a bear sent by God until it tore all the boys to bits."

"What significance do you attach to this story?" I asked.

"Well," he replied, "what God decrees comes to pass whether it be boys or bears or prophets."

It took us two nights to get through all the stories, and when we came to distribute the prizes there was some grumbling. It takes much work to get anything into the heads and hearts of these boys, but one is encouraged by the results obtained among a few who are in earnest about these things, and interested in the message of Salvation.

CHAPTER VI

Arab View of Europeans

THE Arab prides himself on a vast superiority over the European. This superiority is not due to diligence, nor is it marked by righteousness; it is a favour bestowed on him by God. That is the factor that determines his position in the world, and gives him a perch over all others. If it is pointed out to him that between his theology and its practice there is a dividing chasm, he introduces this favouritism to redress the disparity between them. The sultan will wink at a crime done by his son which would call down his vengeance if committed by a slave.

Considering himself firmly established in this position he claims authority to be a competent judge of others outside the fold of Islam. His opinion of Europeans is expressed in the words: "Inasara sinara wa simara." (Europeans are hooks and hammers). They go fishing about the world for other lands to

exploit. They induce the sultan, or Government, to accept a loan, knowing that the money will be squandered, so that when the time comes to refund it the wherewithal to do so will be lacking. This provides an excuse to seize the defaulter's country, then having got into it they nail themselves down and become the rulers. That is the Arabs' first observation, and it is one of condemnation, for he treats this offer of loans as hook and hammer trickery.

A further expression of this distrust is found in the saying: "Ma moumin ma tamin ma tistamin." (If he's not a Moslem don't trust him). The Arabs are distrustful of all European philanthrophy whether it takes the form of free treatment at a hospital or the making of a road to facilitate their movements. Not that they refuse these benefits, but they think they see behind all work that professes to aim at an amelioration of their condition some ulterior motive. Like a hungry animal offered food they want the tit-bit but are suspicious of the trap.

The value of quinine they know from its use, but a free distribution of that article does not indicate so much a concern for their health as a move to make them strong so that they

may work hard at ploughing, road-making, etc., and thus by keeping the country in a prosperous condition make heavy taxation possible to enrich European governors and traders. Why, he asks, are we compelled to be vaccinated against small-pox, we who are not afraid of epidemics because we believe that God controls all sickness? His own answer to this question is that a large increase of population is wanted to provide soldiers to fight European wars. They are aware that between Europeans and themselves there exists a dividing chasm, and whenever this is bridged to facilitate intercourse and trade the accruing benefits are reaped largely by the former.

The show of camaraderie manifest in all the towns is not accepted as a spontaneous and natural ebullition of friendship, but as a lure, like a handful of hay to a horse, to get easy control. But they pride themselves on being aware of all these tricks, and whisper among themselves: "Ma tamin ma tistamin."

They are not enamoured of European manners and customs. Some of these they accept as an amusement, or as a means of promotion, but not as something that has intrinsic and permanent value. On the whole, for them,

European life is too trim and lacks resiliency. It does not allow scope to alternate between extremes. Imagine an Arab taking an oath at marriage to honour and love his wife until death parts them! No more would he dream of doing that than he would of throwing his arms round the neck of the donkey he has just purchased, and vow to be its friend until death separated them.

Our marriages are a source of amusement to them, and some of the practices connected with these are looked upon as being childish and foolish. If we wished to outrage an Arab's sense of decency the most effective way to go about it would be to walk his bride through the streets in her wedding attire and allow the rabble to look upon her. To do so would be to give the public what is his own peculiar property, namely, her beauty. Yet that is exactly what he sees Europeans doing, making a kind of shop window of their brides for people to stare at and admire. It is like a man who, having purchased some precious treasure which he claims and desires to be absolutely his own, shows it off to the mob in the street from the house-top, and thus

exposes himself to the danger of theft. It is a practice beyond their comprehension.

The Arabs have no doubt about the existence of God. They would as soon doubt their own as His. They do not labour to believe, their faith is not something requiring support from logic, but is as natural to them as is the confidence of a babe in its mother. They are fond of disputing fine theological points, and are at home in threading their way through a web of intricate arguments to establish the divine origin and finality of Islam, but over the existence of God they will not dispute. To do so is blasphemy.

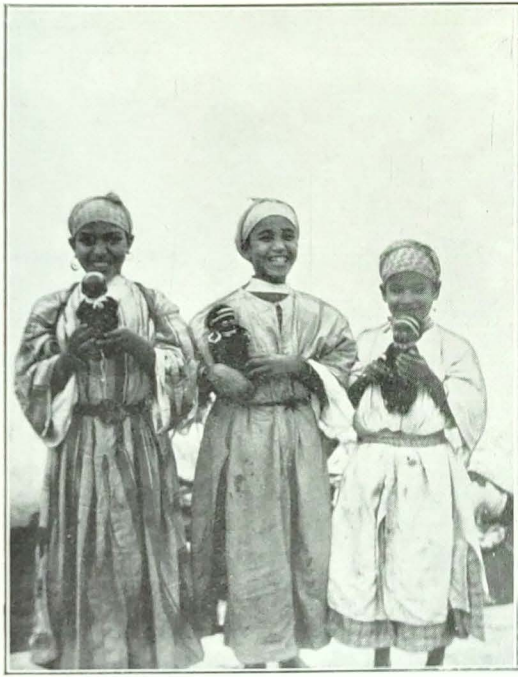
It is here they see the greatest defect of European life. The majority of people coming to Morocco from Europe they find have no religion, no faith, and the Arabs can explain this only by believing that God has blinded their eyes so that His purpose, stated in the Koran, to the effect that He will fill Hell as He will fill Heaven, may be carried out by the use of this unbelieving material that must perish.

They see the material triumphs of those who have invaded their country as a superimposed structure which God allows to ascend

higher and higher so that the coming collapse and destruction may be the more conspicuous.

The "Jahid" (holy crusade of Moslems against the non-Moslem world) is for the time being side-tracked, but its return to the main line, as a force that will destroy all opposition to Islam and convert the world to its creed, is only a matter of time. As happened at the first crusade when the Arabs broke through the confines of their desert country to overwhelm and plunder many nations, so will it be at the second; we are simply banking wealth for the Moslems to loot.

In this connection a secret message goes round which is stated in two words; "Sharaka, Hillaka." Only two words but they imply much to those who can rightly interpret them. Literally, they read: "Partnership is destruction." But their full meaning can only be understood by those who, in the know of things, link them up with secret hopes. They have a bearing—to give one instance of their application—on the question of intermarriage between the two races. If this were to take place on a large scale it would produce a new race in which the distinctive features of Islam



SHOWING OFF THEIR DOLLS

BERBER GIRL CARRYING BABY

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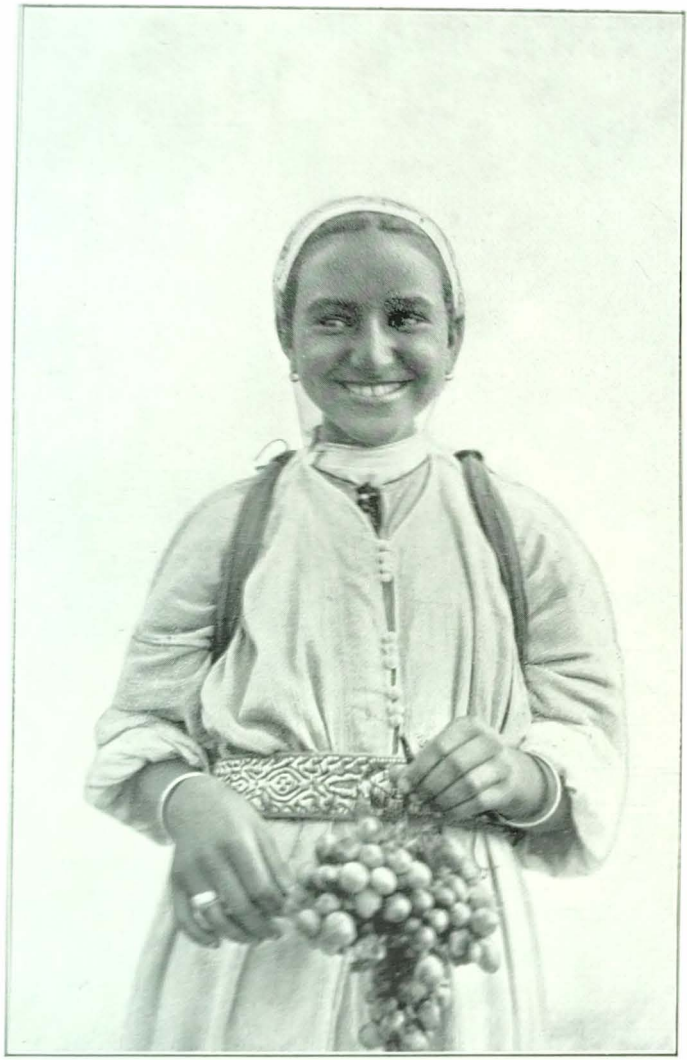


A "BRIGHT" GIRL OF MOROCCO

would become obliterated with resultant loss of enthusiasm for the Jahid. This, for Islam, would be a disaster, and that is why the tocsin "Sharaka Hillaka" is constantly sounded in this connection.

Compromise is allowable, in the circumstances is inevitable, but though oil and water may be poured into the same bottle they do not mix. All the feeling on this subject of separation for the purpose of unity in the world of Islam, with a view to overthrowing the non-Moslem world, is contracted into this phrase: "Partnership is destruction." When we skim the surface of its coating of camaraderie and dip below we find these are the views the Arabs hold of us.

If we say, as I have done on more than one occasion, that one sees and hears little of this agitation, and that in any case the prospects of forcing it into reality appear to be very distant, the reply is: "Ilkhabar fee roos ilkabar." In other words, the news of these things is an undercurrent that flows among responsible people who know how to keep the secret.

CHAPTER VII

"Kiskass" Tyranny

IN a country like North Africa it is never easy for a convert from Islam to Christianity to make open confession of Jesus Christ. Civilisation has done something to mitigate the extreme measures which once were used against Moslem apostates, but it has done nothing to curb the nagging persecution and lurking danger of underhand treason which may lead to poisoning or other form of assault difficult to investigate.

A number of men and women, however, have made open confession, and boldly accepted the consequences attaching to it. But many more are hidden believers who have not been daring enough to announce publicly their break from Islam, or who have, after some attempts to advance into the open, retreated before the onslaughts of their persecutors. One man who professes to receive the Gospel tells me he cannot see his way to follow the

course set out in the New Testament, that is, relative to confession. It is comparatively easy for a convert moored to the mission house to talk loudly of his Christian faith, but for those who have to face the world, and extract a living from it, it is a hard path to tread.

The man referred to above puts his difficulties forward in this way: "A rabbit that is free and one that is boxed are in very different positions. When danger threatens the former it can bolt, or hide in a hole; but in the case of the latter it has no means of protection. It is at the mercy of all who wish to poke and annoy it. Now, you as a British subject, are free, have means of protecting yourself either by quitting the country or appealing to your consul. I am a Mohammedan subject boxed within Moslem law. Open confession on my part spells danger and leaves me without a court of appeal or means of flight. Make me a British subject and I will vie with you in the spread of the Gospel. As things are I must content myself with whispering my testimony in secret, but cannot whip it into the open."

In another case the difficulties of confession were put in this manner. "I believe your Message, but open confession is out of the

question." When asked why, the answer given was: "You must not expect a display of courage from a hedgehog under a kiskass." A kiskass is an earthen vessel with a round bottom pierced with several holes. It is placed partly inside another vessel from which steam rises to cook the food through the holes in the kiskass. When not in use it is always placed mouth downward as it cannot stand on its round bottom. Boys sometimes catch hedgehogs, put them in the kiskass, mouth downwards, and then poke with a stick at the animal through the steam holes.

My friend's answer is now plain. Born a Moslem he could not be free from Mohammedan law. He could secretly change his faith, but not his nationality. He was under the kiskass of Koranic authority, and life could only be tolerable by maintaining silence.

In such cases a whole column of questions faces the missionary. Should such a man have secret baptism? But since baptism is an open confession would not secret baptism defeat its own end? Should work as far as possible be found for such men within the precincts of the mission compound, where a measure of protection would be possible? Would not their

secret testimony and the influence of their Christian lives, even if muffled, be more effective, mingling with their fellows than if made openly within the circumscribed limits of the mission house?

The manner in which these believers state their case may seem somewhat crude, as the above illustration indicates, but we get a better idea of their difficulties and feelings on these matters when we allow them to voice their fears in their own quaint way.

Walking along the street one day, with a man whom I was urging to come out boldly in confession for the Lord, he stopped, looked me straight in the eyes, and after a pause, during which he did some thinking, said to me in substance, this: "This walking stick, might, if it could speak, say, 'Thank God I am free. I move about town, enjoy the sunshine, do as I please, and if involved in a fight can hold my own.' But such a claim would be deceptive, because although I have only a small hold on this stick I hold it by its vital part, the head, and so control all its movements. Now, like this stick, I have freedom of a kind, but my head is in the grip of Mohammedan law which claims the right

to control my thinking on religious subjects, and determines the focus of my faith." At this juncture of our conversation he whirled his stick about wildly, and said: "Look! That's freedom." Then bringing it down with a thud on the ground, he continued: "And that's an end of freedom when I assert my authority."

The Arabs of North Africa, descendants of those armies that presented themselves with the blazonment of inflated victors at the doors of China, India, Africa, and Europe, calling for a complete surrender of the religion these countries held, are not going to allow, if they can help it, whole batches of men to abandon Islam and embrace Christianity which their ancestors crusaded to crush. They demand that, whatever material changes take place, however much civilisation may alter externals, the religion promulgated by their fathers must be treated as permanent even although it fails to give peace or pardon to sinners.

The martial fanaticism of the early crusaders of Islam has subsided under pressure of strong nations, but the monotonous assertion that Mohammed is the Prophet of God must be kept going by all who have been born under the symbol of the crescent. That is what secret

believers call in their quaint way, "Kiskass tyranny."

North Africa is like a primeval forest of giant oak trees, gnarled and hardened by centuries of growth. The missionary effort among its people is like trying to cut those trees down with penknives and a few scattered workers. The feeling gains ground among all who have thought over the problem seriously that the evangelisation of the country waits for the ministry of a native church. We do not solve the problem of a shop where buyers are few, and the goods not wanted, by taking on more hands; nor can we solve the problem of the evangelisation of North Africa by sending out more and more missionaries. The goods presented by those already on the field are not being accepted by any more than a fraction of the people. This condition of things can be changed only when a native church catches the fire of Pentecost, and its members go forth under this impulse to present the grace of God to their kindred.

This does not imply that the sending out of missionaries should immediately cease, for there are whole sections of the country where no missionary is permanently settled. The

witness of the Christian Church must be kept going until native converts are sufficiently strong and numerous to launch an offensive against this stronghold of Islam. The secret believers expect our prayers and sympathy rather than our censure for what we may too easily call their cowardice. Real freedom is on the way, and when it arrives Islam will be driven out of its last stronghold.

CHAPTER VIII

The Harem

THE Arab is an inveterate polygamist. He sees no more sense or convenience in being bound for a lifetime to one woman than he sees in being kept on one diet. He claims that Allah who created him understands his desires and propensities, and has made generous provision to satisfy these, having allowed him four wives at one time, and as many concubines as he pleases. His wives are bought in the same way as his cows or donkeys. He bids for them, haggles over the price, and having made his purchase, brings them home as his absolute property. If at the end of a week, or later, he has reason to be dissatisfied with a wife he can divorce her with little or no trouble.

The place where a rich man keeps his wives is called a harem. The root of the word is "herim," and signifies "to be unlawful." It occurs in the well-known passage in the Koran

where it is written: "God has made commerce lawful, but usury unlawful" (herim). A harem, then, is that part of a house into which it is unlawful for anyone to go except by special permission of the owner. At the entrance to such houses, sits an eunuch whose sole business is to see that this rule is enforced, and that no one disturbs the paradisaic pleasures of his master. To the stranger approaching the house this man's countenance proclaims more emphatically than words: "Positively no admittance." But even if one succeeded in dodging the doorkeeper he would find a labyrinth of lobbies, winding stairs and dark passages between the entrance and the harem, which could not be easily negotiated without the aid of a guide.

What kind of a life do the women of the harem quarters live? The answer to this question is at hand, for a host of women who once lived within their precincts have been divorced and gone out to tell the world the story of their seclusion.

From the two converging streams of idleness and jealousy there is set up a constant cross-current of bickering and quarrelling. A household of women of different colours and ages, all

at the disposal of a single master's whims, becomes a breeding ground for all the low elements lodged in human nature. Their own saying, "The harem is a palm tree," describes vividly the prevailing conditions in these quarters. As the new branches break forth from the head of the palm tree the lower ones are gradually edged outwards, then downward until, deprived of all sap, they wither and ultimately die. The young wives between twelve and fifteen years of age gradually oust the others who are nearing twenty, or beyond it. Under the impact of jealousy they paint their faces, dress in bizarre clothes and sprinkle their hair and faces with enticing odours in an effort to attract their husbands toward them. This practice calls forth from the younger ones the gibe: "Jealousy rejuvenates the aged."

Now in the case where a young man, say, of twenty years of age, begins to establish for himself a harem, by the time he is forty his household is a centre of strangely mixed populations. His original batch of wives may all be gone, dead or divorced. Indeed, he may have divorced twenty wives and married another twenty. In numerous cases the percentage is higher. Some of the children of

the divorced wives will have gone to live with their mothers, while others will be retained by the father. That is why we sometimes hear the strange request from these children: "Mother, I want to go and play with my father's children!"

Now, a man with twenty years of harem life behind him will have sons and daughters grown up to marriageable age. It is not, therefore, an uncommon thing for such a man to have several daughters considerably older than his youngest wives. But that is not all the tale. Here is a man with, say thirty years of harem life behind him. At this stage he purchases a new wife aged fourteen. One of his daughters of his first wife thirty years ago is twenty-nine. She has been married sixteen years and has a daughter of fifteen. The father's latest wife, therefore, is one year younger than his granddaughter!

In such a household children are always numerous. Each mother is alert for the welfare of her own, and this eagerness to secure favours is a source of much trouble. The standing of the children is determined by colour. The dark ones lord it over the coal-blacks; the olive-coloured ones seek service

from the darks, while the white dominate the whole.

The owner of such a home might appear to foreigners to be bearing an almost intolerable burden. Nothing of the kind. We receive such an impression only because we bring our mentality and standards to bear upon the situation. The owner of this household of human souls is absolute lord within the precincts of his own gate. Every one renders him obeisance, and nothing gives the Arab more pleasure than the exercise of power over his kind.

A literal translation of the Koranic description of Heaven is not suitable for English readers, but those who have read it know it is largely the atmosphere of the harem transferred from the seclusion of a building to the banks of flowing streams and shady avenues. A religion or a law that fates a man to one wife in a life time, and makes no provision for marriage on a glorified scale in the life to come is, to the Arab, a freak. They will not allow that the paradisaic pleasures of the Koran should be treated as allegory, or spiritualised. Such an interpretation would rob them of Heaven's biggest promise.

On the whole, the owner of a harem turns a deaf ear to the complaints which his wives raise one against another. But human nature in seclusion is much the same as in the open, and when it is denied a court of appeal against oppression, it finds vent in desperate acts. When things come to such a pass the husband may do one of two things: retire and allow passion to run its course; or take the stick and whip the lot, with, perhaps, the exception of his favourite wife. But I knew one man who employed a different method of correction. He traced the irritation with its consequent unrest and quarrelling to stomach disorder, and gave every female in the house a big dose of Epsom salts!

So long as a man is not too old, is able to move about and attend to his affairs, he gets what he deems the privilege of his prerogative —the power to dominate a household of women and children. But in the end the penalty is extracted. When age overtakes him and he can only crawl about he is despised, and gets service only by making threats. Arab women treat husbands who are disabled by age with profound contempt.

What happens when the husband dies?

The household is usually scattered, and women frequently have to go out to extract a living from a world to which they are strangers, having made few contacts with it, and seen none of its activities beyond those afforded them by a glimpse from the house-top after sunset.

CHAPTER IX

Moorish Proverbial Philosophy

THE saws, adages, and epigrams which embody a large part of the Moor's philosophy, find their origin in a variety of circumstances. Some are of Meccan mould, and are heavy with the mysticism of the East: these are common property throughout the Moslem world. Others which are formed in pure classical Arabic come down from a hoary past tinged with the despair or perplexity that springs from the mystery of things. The bulk of Moorish proverbs, however, have a local boundary, are wrapped up in the language of street and market, while the origin of some can be traced to a period of crisis, dramatic victory, and not infrequently to some wary sultan who found it necessary at times to put his snubs for foreign ministers, and other officials who pestered him, into the framework of a proverb, and so take away somewhat from the bluntness of the rebuke.

MOORISH WOMEN AT WORK IN THE HOME

A BLIND BEGGAR IN THE STREETS, MARRAKSH

In the case of some of these proverbs it is essential to give the setting in which I heard them spoken to elucidate their meaning.

Hospitality is a characteristic feature of Moorish life, but at times it tends to become a tyranny. The guest who turns up too frequently, and invites too seldom, gets a reminder of his defect with this: "Whoever eats other folks fowls should fatten his own."

The aged cut at the indulgences of youth with: "No beard, no shame." But youth returns the blow with interest: "What goes into the beard comes out of the brain."

Those who are profuse in manners and feeble in morals are reminded that: "The big walnut is often empty."

Divorce is both common and easy in this land. Numerous proverbs are current to excuse the abuses connected with it: "Dersa wa itigeaala, ilimera wa ilbera." This is difficult to translate, but the meaning is fairly clear, thus: "Women and teeth are prone to decay; but forceps and divorce work out the same way." A number of others in this connection are too vulgar for translation into English.

The social line is very clearly drawn in this country. The poor who attempt to enter the

company of the rich get a tilt with this text:

"Though carrots and onions by God were created,
They in the same bed are never mated."

The idea here is that the carrot with its thin skin is like the poor who are sparsely clothed, while the onion with its many layers resembles the rich who love to weight themselves with many garments.

Moorish judges were, until quite recent times, notorious for their corruption and love of bribes. Naturally there are many proverbs that whip this evil. The following speaks for itself: "When the Cadi is your foe, lift your title deeds and go."

And this is for the poor man who asks the doorkeeper if the judge will accept his small gift:

"The elephant's trunk deals with two extemes;
It picks up matches as well as beams."

A great noise about a small matter is hit off by: "Gunaza kibeara, far meata" (a great funeral for a dead mouse).

As an excuse for all kinds of sins and vices, one constantly hears:

"Fate is the wind; we are the smoke,
Its power upon us is absolute."

On one occasion I was drinking tea with a company of Moors who had gathered to welcome a friend returned from the Great War. The soldier had a great story to tell, all of which centred round his own heroism. The stuff he gave us was so hot and exaggerated, that even his own friends, who had never travelled far beyond the limits of their own tribe, gave vent to their doubts by nudging each other with their elbows. One man lost patience; rising up and pointing to the ceiling, he said in a tone of excitement: "Look! Look! The bottle has fallen; the oil that it contained remains suspended in space." A rather neat way of telling the soldier he was a liar!

One day, within my hearing, a native was being scolded for not having written a letter which he had again and again promised to write. He began to excuse himself: when the mood to write was with him he could not find paper, or there was no ink; to which the other replied: "When couples want to kiss, they won't miss the mouth."

This is for the old miser who continues to hoard: "The dying hawk still stares at the chicken."

The man who has no intention of paying his

debts tells his creditor that he'll pay him all "on the day that has no father." As each day is treated as the father of the following one, the meaning is clear.

A class of young men, to whom I was teaching English, thinned very considerably when the grammar became complicated. One evening, we were reduced to three. "What has become of the others?" I enquired. The answer came from a lad named Ilaarabi, and took this form:

> "She, who her charms by ear-rings increased,
> First suffered pain when the ears were pierced."

They desired the adornment of an acquired language, but were not prepared to go through the preliminary difficulties inseparable from it.

Two dirty little girls were having a quarrel outside our door: "Go away and wash your clothes," said the one who, if anything, was more filthy than the other. Then came this cutting retort from the other side: "Imagine the fishing net saying to the sieve, 'Oh, my! you are full of holes!'"

When a person is being taken for a simpleton, or inexperienced youth, which he isn't, he puts two fingers to his temples, points them

forward at his opponent and says: "See, my horns are long."

Moorish trustees have always been notorious for their dishonesty. Of them the orphans complain: "They buried our fathers and stole the spade."

This is for the notary who, when bribed, falsifies a document, and shuns the evidence that stares him in the face:

"The notary and crab have this same defection;
They look ahead then move in another direction."

The mother-in-law who, jealous of her son's girl wife, tries to ape her with henna dye and fine clothes, is pilloried thus: "Jealousy rejuvenates the aged." The original is striking: "Ilghera katrid Ilagooza sghera."

An exhortation to patience for those making a slow recovery from a serious illness, is contained in these lines: "Sickness comes by hundredweights, and goes by ounces."

"Taghada wa tamida; taasha wa timisha," has its English equivalent in: "After dinner rest awhile; after supper walk a mile."

"Enough is as good as a feast" finds its Arabic equivalent in two words: "Kuna shibaa."

The Moor is not a stranger to the sweet uses

of adversity: "Had the bridge not come down, we never would have learned to swim."

The following is a good example of ingratitude. But its meaning is involved, and so I give the circumstances in which I first heard it, to help elucidate its meaning. A young man whom I knew well, met me in the street with his brows drawn together in anger. "What's the matter?" I enquired. To which he answered: "Trees are refreshed and strengthened by rain; but chips from the former cause the latter pain." He had just lost his job in a French cafe. About a year previous to this, he had taken pity on a poor lad and got him work in the kitchen of the cafe. This lad had succeeded by some trickery in ousting his friend from his post as waiter, and was now installed there himself. The young man had "refreshed" the poor lad by finding him work, but was now being "pained" by him as water (metaphorically speaking) is, when boiled by chips from the very tree to which it had given life.

The Moors, who have found fortune a fickle fellow, make many a poke at him with their proverbs. Here is a common one: "The useful vases are often broken, while those

which have no value beyond their ornamentation, are left intact." This illustrates the rise to position of those who had no qualification for ruling tribes or country.

Here is another: "Fortune seeks her master; coming, a hair will guide her; going, she breaks bars of iron."

The risk attaching to a first move in a dangerous enterprise is brought out in the following: "Let the tallest fool first test the depth of the stream."

The man who comes to the money lender to borrow on too slender security is turned away with the reminder that, "Though men climb palm trees, they do not sit on their branches."

"No wise mule will boast of its pedigree," says the strong man who is afraid of work.

In this country it is always dangerous to contradict one's superiors. So: "If the Sultan at midnight says it is noon, swear you see the sun": and again: "Kiss the hand you cannot bite."

The master rebukes his clumsy apprentice with: "He who created me, created you; and He who created you created the donkey."

The conceited person who dresses up in fine

clothes, and saunters along the street to show them off, will be told before he reaches his house again, that: "A donkey on the house-top attracts attention."

"Heris ilgirgaa wa yagharish idood" (Crack the walnut, and the worm crawls out). That is for the "saint" who allows himself an occasional unlawful indulgence.

"Choose unlawful things as you choose your worries." That is, none is worth having.

These proverbs have been born out of the experience of this people, and are, therefore, a true gauge to their temperamental qualities and attitude towards life.

CHAPTER X

Among the Atlas Berbers

TO get an idea of the physical proportions of the Atlas range, we have to picture to our minds a chain of peaks and plateaux, stretching for hundreds of miles, and rising here and there into conical formation three times the height of Ben Nevis. A bit of wholesome guessing produces the theory that in the Pleistocene age, and before the Mediterranean existed, the mountain systems of Spain and Italy were an unbroken continuation of the Atlas range.

This great natural boundary was the factor that ultimately arrested the invading Arabs, and determined the limits of their conquest in Africa. But for this barrier they probably would have continued their advance to the heart of Africa, or even conquered the whole of the continent.

Until within a few years ago the Atlas section of Morocco was inaccessible to nearly

all but its own inhabitants. To Europeans it was barred, bolted, and locked. Now and then a missionary invited by a Governor to vaccinate his people against small-pox, would get a peep at the life of the people along the lower slopes, but residence was never possible.

The people who dwell upon these slippery slopes and secluded glens, are called Berbers, and in another section to the south, Shilha. They were the original inhabitants of Morocco and were driven, after long and fierce fighting, into these impregnable fastnesses by the Arabs. They acknowledged the central government of the country only in a nominal manner, in some sections not at all, and never paid any taxes to the Sultan. They have been ruled throughout the centuries by powerful Caids whose rapaciousness and oppression amounted to cruelty.

In these regions the winter is rigorous, the inhabitants being snowed in and unable to move far from their own villages. But they love their homes with a great intensity, and their eulogistic description of the life and deliciousness of their hidden glens is rather over-stated and frequently amusing. Like all people who dwell in solitude, with great empty

spaces surrounding them, whether of sea, sand or mountain, their sense of the spiritual is developed to a fine keenness, and becomes the anodyne for all the drawbacks inseparable from isolation. This spiritual sense peoples the unseen with a vast army of forces, some of which are favourable to men and others who seek his destruction.

On different occasions I have received a permit from the authorities to journey to the high valleys where I have met the people in their villages, preached to them and left portions of the New Testament in their homes. They are extremely reserved, and one's first approach is met with a statuesque pose that loudly proclaims suspicion. Civilisation—of which they hear enough these days from the men who visit distant towns to sell their produce, chiefly almonds and skins—is treated as something which has erupted from the underworld, and the missionary visiting these parts for the first time is naturally, until he explains himself, looked upon as a representative of a mode of life they detest, although most of them have never made contact with it, unless, perhaps, in these days, through a piece of cheap Japanese cloth.

But a few sentences in their own language works miracles: barriers give way, smiles displace suspicion, the statuesque pose loses its rigidity and sways to the point of enjoying a joke, or bends to show courtesy.

There are no towns here. The valleys and furrowed slopes are studded with villages, most of which are small. Unlike the Arabs they do not erect straw huts, but build walls with a mixture of small stones, mud, and straw. The houses of the Caids and well-to-do farmers are mostly built upon an eminence, a kind of excrescence bulging out of the mountain side, and give the impression, in their castle form, of great strength. But close examination dissipates this illusion, for though these buildings would undoubtedly prove effective defences against an attack of primitive weapons they would not be so against even a small modern gun.

There is something intriguing about these villages, and as one views them from a distance, the dozen houses or so that compose one, look like cages hung upon the slopes. They seem to invite one to take refuge from the storms and disappointments of life. But alas, this impression which grips one at a distance loses

its fascination when actual contact is made with the place and people, and few Europeans, even those accustomed to a minimum of comfort, could face up to the squalor, vermin, disease, jealousy, curses, and quarrelling that vitiate these homes. How true it is that "every ship is full of romance but the one we sail in," but when we go on board we too often find the good things which our fancy had framed washed away, leaving the salient evils of life prominent.

The people are all Mohammedans. They lived in the plains before the arrival of the Arabs, had their own language, customs and religion. They retain their language up to the present time, and also many of their customs, but not their religion. The defects of Islam are as glaring here as elsewhere. Religion is disassociated from ethical standards and treated as a kind of workshop where rough repairs are made in anticipation of a complete overhaul in the next world. Existence here is but a passsing phase where the most we can do is to "suck a sudden sweetness" from sensual indulgence, and then pass on to the pleasures of Paradise where physical limitation will be removed and indulgence become eternal

and free from flagging. Under the influence of these moral views and future prospects, life has melted down to a kind of spiritualised fatalism which has stultified their being.

To go into these villages, as I have done, where previously no missionary has set foot, and there present the Gospel to a people whose religious views have not been challenged from any outside source for a millennium, is to engage in a strange and moving experience. One is not surprised to find them indifferent and convulsive in turns, towards the missionary's message. Backward people are like animals in some respects, and the missionary who would win and harness them to the chariot of the Lord, must pick his steps, lest a false move should antagonise them at the beginning of operations.

But changed days for the Atlas people are rapidly approaching. Civilisation—that feverish road-maker—is pushing its paths further and further every month into the mysterious glens. Already in some of the sections considered safe for Europeans, hotels have been built, and a campaign of advertising launched to attract tourists to winter sports. Under such attractive headings as "Oranges and

Snow," Cascades and Camping," people are being invited to try a holiday in a centre which offers something new.

These facilities open a track for the missionary. We have made a beginning by establishing stations at the base of the mountains, and we trust the day is not so far distant when the Heralds of the Cross will penetrate to the distant glens and climb to the high plateaux to tell these people, who have so long been in the grip of Islam, of Him who came to be a Prince and Saviour.

CHAPTER XI

Quaint Expressions

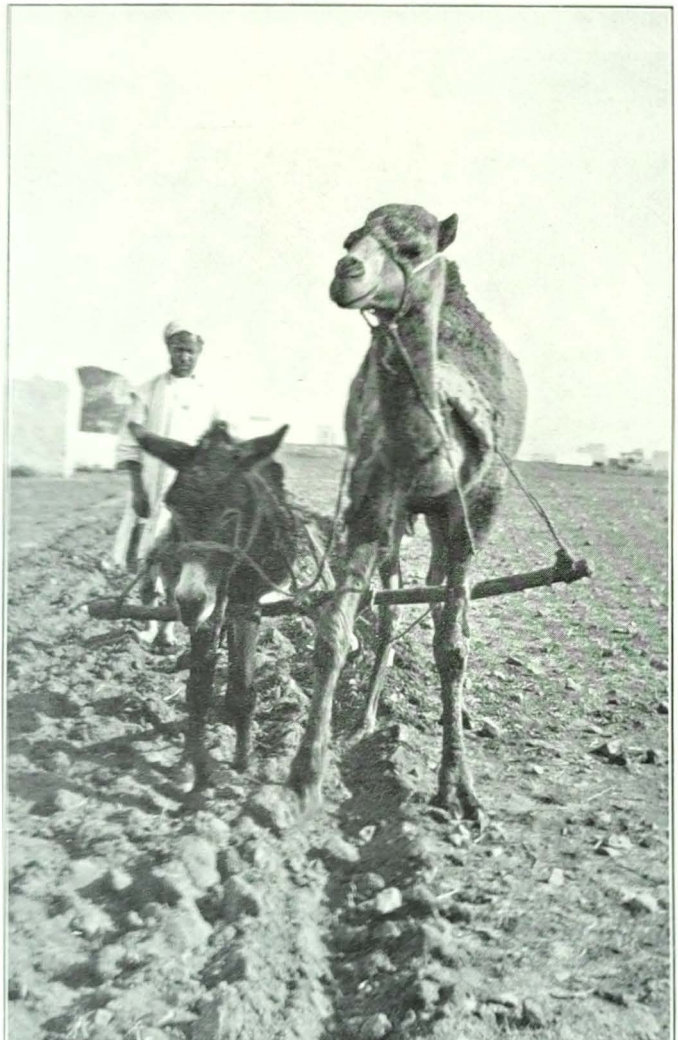
THE Arabs use many expressions which sound strange to European ears. Their meaning does not lie on the surface, at least, not always, and one has to do some poking and questioning to get at the underlying significance.

An old man whom I meet occasionally, points to the furrows upon his brow, and treating these metaphorically as waves, tells me "he is being washed ashore to the land of death." Sometimes he changes the metaphor and treats the furrows as "The angel of death's stepping stones."

When one is slack where alertness is required, fooling when circumstances demand close attention, he is called upon "to stand on the leg of seriousness" (Okif aala sak iljid).

They are fond of introducing a subject by some preliminary embellishment. "Was until was God in every place. There is no place where He is not; then there was a lily and a

"RAW" MATERIAL



THE UNEQUAL YOKE

flowerpot." How strange that sounds in our ears! And this: "What we now relate to you we have heard from the Generous Ones, and hope we are repeating it to other Generous Ones." Touches like these show what a chasm exists between Arab and European mentality.

When a man has spent some money he says he has "killed" it. A "Killer of the way" is one well acquainted with the road being traversed. "I do not kill in you the Knowledge," is a way of apologising to a person for having passed without returning friendly recognition.

A man who was being oppressed by his enemies, and could find no human means of protecting himself stated the defensive power still at his disposal in the words: "Allah hooa shoki" (God is my sting).

A farmer who wished to see me privately introduced himself thus: "I have not been here; I do not know you." In such a manner he expressed a desire to keep his visit secret.

"You weigh more than me," is equivalent in meaning to the expression: "You have got the better of me."

"Kiber bilkhatim sghara," refers to the practice of allowing a ring, put on the finger

in youth, to become embedded in the flesh so that it cannot be removed when one has grown up. A person, then, who has grown into a habit, such as smoking, which he cannot break off has "grown up with a small ring."

Two Arabs were fighting in the street one day. The usual crowd of curious folk gathered to see the fun. I passed by without halting. When I returned about fifteen minutes later all was quiet. "Is it over?" I asked a friend. "The sea is in the tub," he replied. He explained that the fighters had gone to prison and that, just as sea water cannot remain boisterous when confined to a tub no more could men when locked up in a cell.

The Arabs must be credited with some imagination since they name the rainbow, "the bridegroom of the rain"; and the onion, "the rich man with many clothes."

The years a person has lived are treated as his property: "I am the owner of twenty years." To the question, "Whose is this?" one frequently gets the unenlightened reply: "It belongs to its owner." "The Owner," or "Our Owner," are used as names for God.

"My eyes took me away," or "Sleep deceived me," are applied to oversleeping oneself.

A thing done before breakfast, as for instance, the taking of medicine, is "done upon the spittle." That is, before food has mixed with saliva.

When a son quarrels with a father, and as a consequence threatens to leave home, he employs the same word as that used for emptying a vessel: "I am going to empty the district of my presence."

They treat the liver as a seat of affection: "I cannot part from my children because of the pull on my liver."

If we ask a servant, "Who broke this?" we usually get a reply that shifts the responsibility on to the article broken. "It broke to me."

"He died God's death," means that the person died a natural death.

When a person, trying to escape from a critical position, makes an effort to force his way through an opening in the obstacle that imprisons him and finds it too small to allow his body to go through, he says: "This will not provide a way of escape." In like manner, when a price is offered for an article which the shopkeeper considers too low, he informs his customer that "it does not deliver." The goods cannot get through so small a sum.

"My plate is my property," indicates the right to decide for oneself.

The word "father" is used in curious ways. The hedgehog is "The Father of the spikes." "Father of the red ones," is measles. Distinction is made between the tiger and the leopard by referring to the former as "the father of the stripes," and to the latter as "the father of the spots. A glutton is "a father of the stomach."

A bullet has something of the appearance of a seed, and the word used to cast seed into the soil (zeraa) is also used for the loading of a rifle: "Sow the rifle."

An intermediary desirous of settling a quarrel introduces himself with, "God curse the devil"; or "Prayers be upon the Select Prophet."

"I have returned with my brains," means, "I have learned from experience."

"The powder is speaking," describes a state of war.

A weary, hungry traveller introduces himself as "God's guest" (deef Allah).

An imbecile is called "maador," that is, "one who is excused."

"Mickseen bilaara," is a strange expression and a contradiction in terms (dressed up in

nakedness). It is used against a person who, having little of this world's goods, puts on one showy garment to give the impression that he is well to do.

"He has seized the bed," means that the person is bedridden.

When one is about to introduce some subject of calamity as sickness, financial loss, or war, it is usually prefaced by, "There is no power nor might except from God"; or, "There is no stir nor stoppage except by the will of God."

The town crier introduces his subject with a splash of theology: "Oh, servants of God, there will be nothing but good, if He wills it, so; but the time limit for paying taxes is past. Five more days of grace are extended to you, after that, prison."

"Two beetles and confirmation," must sound strange to European ears; but the words refer to the signature of two notaries and a Caid, usually attached to title deeds and official documents. The reason why they are called beetles is because in shape they often bear a strong resemblance to those crawling creatures. Those signatures have authority only when followed by that of the Cadi's, called "Itbat" (confirmation).

CHAPTER XII

Ferrying Between Two Faiths

THERE died not long ago an interesting man whom I knew well, and who spoke English with considerable fluency. Some forty years ago, when he was still a young man, he got into touch with an English gentleman who had come to Morocco to make a long stay. They became attached to each other so closely that when the gentleman returned to England he took Mohammed with him.

He stayed in England for two years acting the part of butler for his master. During that time he attended regularly the Sunday services in a Christian Church, and became absorbingly interested in the practical manifestations of Christianity which he saw on every hand, and this generated within him a settled resolution to drop his Moslem fanaticism and investigate for himself the Christian religion which he had been brought up to believe was nothing more than a piece of the Devil's roguery. By

enquiry and observation he became convinced that Christianity far from being, as it was represented in his country to be, a fraud, was a powerful and purifying force that made people good, reverent, and worshipful. In his own words, it "had come down from God."

He loved his master, had learned to worship with him, and was much impressed by the prevailing order and prosperity of English life. But his own country tugged at his heart. He knew it was backward, that oppression was rife, that spurts of rebellion between Governors and Sultans were causing upheaval, but after all he loved Morocco; it was his home. So he returned and settled down in the town of Mazagan in South Morocco.

Some months after I arrived in Mazagan to begin missionary work there, I was walking down the main street when a man, well dressed, intelligent looking, and of elderly appearance, approached and addressed me in English and in an English manner. That was my first meeting with Mohammed, and from then, up to within a short time of his death, we met frequently and talked together. When we became intimate he told me his history, not all

at a sitting, but in sections as the mood to reveal himself prevailed.

Describing marriage, he said: "I married only once. I found running life with a woman was a very trying experience, so I divorced her and resolved never to marry again." A step of that kind is of the rarest occurrence among Arabs. He had no children and lived alone, bringing a charwoman in occasionally to clean up his room.

My particular interest in him was on the religious side, but it was always difficult to get a clearly defined statement of his attitude toward Christianity and his relationship to Islam. Or, rather, I should say he blended these to such an extent that it was difficult to disentangle them from his life and testimony. There were times when he seemed to be a thorough-going Christian, while at other times he showed strong attachment to Islam in some phase of its external operations, and not infrequently he was distinctly Mr. Facing-Both-Ways.

He had been delighted to worship in a Christian Church, and on his own repeated testimony was a Christian. But on the other hand, although he never saw much in the daily

outcome of Mohammedanism, and frequently deplored its barrenness, he was linked by an undeniable attachment to its Founder, and made the long and expensive journey to Mecca to visit his tomb.

In his friendship with me he had no axe to grind, for he had property from which he drew monthly rents, and also had money in the bank.

One day, when we were reading the Bible together in my house, he said to me at the close of our reading: "I read a chapter of the Bible every day. I learned to love it when in England and it is still precious to me." This remark made me feel that the time was appropriate to ask a pointed question. "Tell me, Mohammed," I said, "what exactly is your attitude towards Jesus Christ?" The question piqued him. Was there anything in his words or life to justify such a question which seemed to cast doubt on the value of his testimony? That question though not put into words, was marked upon his visage. "I believe in Him and accept Him," came the spirited reply. "I will ask you to bear with me, Mohammed, while I ask another question, for remember, this is not a matter we can

lightly skip. Do you believe in Jesus as set forth in the Bible, or is your belief shaped by the Koranic history and interpretation of His person?" "I accept Him as revealed in the Bible," he declared firmly.

Some weeks after he had given this testimony, I was walking on the town wall, when I saw my friend, among a group of men who were reading the Koran, listening in a solemn pose and with a facial expression suggestive of fanacticism. It was disappointing for me to find him in this place and attitude, but I passed on without appearing to notice what was going on among them. But up to the end this blending was in evidence. He resembled a sick man attending two doctors, one of whom advised rest for a weak heart, and the other violent exercise for a sluggish liver. Or, to use another metaphor, he ferried between two Faiths, and could be seen, now on this bank, now on that.

Some three years ago signs of failing health became manifest. He went to see a French doctor who diagnosed his disease as creeping paralysis. Every passing month saw a sensible acceleration of his trouble, until he became too feeble to walk any distance. In this con-

dition he called on me one day. He had come about a matter that lay upon his heart. Feeling that the end was approaching, and having no wife or children of his own he wished to arrange with me about his property and money which I think ran into several hundreds of pounds.

He began with a word of appreciation for the work I was doing in the night shelter, where he knew poor people were lodged and had the Gospel preached to them. He then expressed a wish to leave his money and property in my hands to be used through the medium of our mission, and at my discretion, to carry on the work in the shelter, and meet the needs of any poor people who were suffering through poverty. He stipulated, not without emphasis, that there was to be no distinction made between Moslems, Jews, and Europeans; all were to share if in need.

I pointed out to him that a matter of such importance would require to be arranged in writing and before witnesses. He agreed to this suggestion, and I set about to make the enquiries, my suggestion being that we should draw out a document to be signed by the manager of the British bank where his money was, and also by the British Consul. We

failed to carry the matter through. Moorish law blocked the way, and although there were legitimate means of nullifying that blockage Moors would have interpreted such a move as dodging, and this would have had its repercussions in a bad sense.

Some time after this event I was walking along a street which leads to a mosque. It was getting dark, and in front of me were two men supporting an old man who hung heavily on their arms. Slowly and laboriously they moved on until they reached the mosque, which all three entered. The old man was my friend Mohammed, out to say his last prayer for the last time, and then on reaching home he would, perhaps, take his Bible and read his daily chapter. He lived a quiet, honourable life and human judgment is not equipped with the knowledge necessary to pronounce a verdict. His funeral passed our door, and I could hear the men in the procession chant this refrain: "There is no power nor might but of God." If he could have been buried in two cemeteries, Christian and Moslem, I think he would have suggested it.

CHAPTER XIII

The Rosary is the Receipt

JUST about the time William the Conqueror was crowned at Westminster, there was born in Persia a Moslem named Abd El Kadeer. He became one of Islam's most celebrated saints. This man claimed to have reached such a development of holiness that he had power to pierce through the murk or surrounding human existence and pass to the Unseen where his spirit saw and heard things which no book could contain or prophet proclaim.

Moored by this mysticism to a world beyond the ken of all but a very few, he astonished the multitude, awed Sultans, and drew to himself something bordering on worship.

He founded a Society. Those admitted to its circle had to accept the Koran as God's word and perform the ceremonies embedded in the structure of Islam. But the Founder aimed at something higher than this, for he

believed that the secret of saintliness lay in prolonged and concentrated contemplation of God. His followers, therefore, were initiated into the art of detaching the spirit from the clogging influence of the body so as to free it for this higher worship and service.

Time, far from sapping the claims this saint made for himself, has sanctioned them; and his name is as well-known and revered in the Moslem world to-day as is that of St. Augustine among Christians.

. . . . . .

Some three years ago, a Moslem who belonged to this confraternity of Abd El Kadeer made his appearance in our town where he opened a grocer's shop. He possessed all the outward characteristics of sainthood: contempt for those showy things that bring the crowd into the street to stare, abstemiousness, a sustained silence that was broken only when speech became imperative, and over all this a constant fingering of his rosary as he made his way through the hundred names of God an hundred times a day.

He had not been many weeks in the town when numerous people, hearing of his arrival, called to honour him with their welcome and

salutations. So I determined to make a call. "Welcome to our town, friend, I hear you come from a distant district in the South." There was no response beyond a slight nod of the head by way of acknowledging that he had heard me.

"I hear you are a Kadeeree" (follower of Abd El Kadeer) I continued. He turned his back to me as if he scented blasphemy. What right had I, an "Infidel," to take upon my lips the great saint's name? In the days that followed I used every artifice I could think of to engage him in conversation, but without success. When I began to speak I could see him pushing the beads of his rosary through his fingers with a greater impetus, while his lips moved rapidly in silent prayer. Sheathed in his sullenness he remained in this attitude and so made contact impossible.

. . . . . .

At the time of which I write, I had a lad in my employ who was thrifty to the point of meanness. He lived on twopence a day and saved the remainder of his wages, which was left with me until a considerable sum was gathered.

Then one day this lad came to me, looking

sheepish, his head lowered towards the ground. "What is it?" I asked, by way of helping him to make a beginning, for I observed he desired to speak.

"My money, if you please, sir."

"So you are leaving me and going back to your country?"

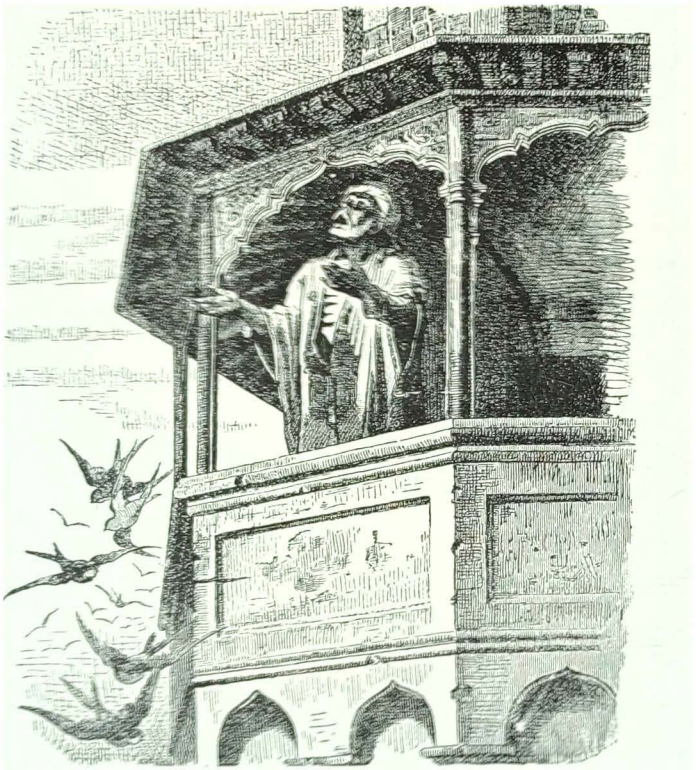
"No, it's not that. I'll never leave you."

"Going to buy clothes, or thinking, perhaps, about marriage?"

He laughed at this suggestion, then came to the point. "I'm going to deposit my savings with the 'Rosary man.'" He hurried, lest I should interrupt him. "I trust you absolutely, but I want my money to be attached to a 'Baraka,' and the Kadeeree has got that."

I gave him his savings which he deposited with the Kadeeree. A number of other people who had their money hidden about the house, brought it out and deposited it as this lad had done. They gave two reasons for doing this: first, money left in the hands of such a man, though gathering no interest, would become imbued with that mysterious thing they call a "baraka"; second, it would be safe, which is not always so in houses where there are grown-up sons.

MOORISH CHARMS TO COUNTER THE EVIL EYE



"THE MAN ON THE MINARET" CALLING THE FAITHFUL TO PRAYER AND WORSHIP (Page 100)

"Do you get a receipt for money left with the Kadeeree?" I asked a baker, who had just deposited ninety-one dollars. The question rankled him.

"His rosary is the receipt," he replied with a snap.

This kind of thing went on for the better part of two years. Anyone requiring his money back in part or in whole received it immediately without any trouble. This added greatly to the confidence of the people; and another factor, namely, his refusal to receive anything for this service enhanced his saintly character.

Then one day the Kadeeree, for the first time since his arrival, was absent from his shop all day. His boy, about ten years of age, was left in charge. The shop, once well stocked, was now almost empty. But this only signified a larger measure of saintship. It was not expected that a man whose fingers were trained for little more than the handling of a rosary, and whose spirit traversed the Unseen, should trouble much about buying and selling.

The days passed, the Kadeeree did not appear and the boy had no information to impart as to his whereabouts. At the end of a month's

absence one man after another began to entertain doubts about the sufficiency of a "rosary receipt," and asked the boy for their money. He had none to give. One night I saw a number of men gathered round the shop. The boy was weeping. I approached and asked what was the matter.

"The Kadeeree has gone as you know, and his son knows nothing about him."

"We want our money and can't get it," said the spokesman.

"It's all right," I said, "you have the 'rosary receipt.'" They were not in a mood for my banter.

Next morning the shop was shut and the boy gone. He evidently had followed studied instructions given by his father, for no one could trace him.

. . . . . .

All those who had left money with the Kadeeree, and merchants who had given him goods on credit, went and lodged a complaint with the authorities. The shop was sealed. Six months passed, and as at the end of that period the Kadeeree did not appear, there was nothing to do but divide the goods in the shop among those who had lost their money.

There would not be more than fifty dollars' worth left. I was present when the distribution was made. One man, bearing away a few packets of candles and blocks of soap, thrust them out in front of me, saying as he did so: "See, that's all I've got for ninety dollars!"

"The rosary is the receipt," I remarked with feigned solemnity.

Another, bearing a packet of candles, a packet of matches, with some other odds and ends, and searching for sympathy, came forward. "Allah! Allah!" he cried, "May that Kadeeree (who is not a Kadeeree, but a hypocrite) be cursed, and all that appertains to him." Then, pointing to me, he continued: "See this Englishman, he wouldn't speak to him, called him infidel, and secretly cursed him; and yet he hadn't a pinch of his honesty." Then smiling, since nothing better could be done now all was lost, he said: "A few packets of candles for sixty-three dollars!"

"The rosary is the receipt," I said with a sigh.

CHAPTER XIV

The Man on the Minaret

ONE of the first things that would strike a person approaching a Moorish town for the first time is the mosque, with its vaulted minaret towering above the flat-roofed, huddled dwellings which cluster around it. There are several hundreds of these mosques scattered throughout the land. Most of them were built long ago and bear the weather stains of many generations. The one in Fez called KAROUIN, was built in the latter half of the 9th century A.D., and the KOUTABIA, of Marrakesh, in the latter half of the 12th century, during the reign of El-Mansour.

During all these centuries, and every day without, perhaps, a single exception, a man has mounted to the platform at the top of the tower attached to these mosques, and called the Faithful to prayer and worship, five times a day. It is an extraordinary record of regularity, and despite the jangle and rush of these

days, still persists. Mingling with the noise of the hooting car, the hiss of the steam engine, and the hum of the aeroplane, is the call of the Mouden from his minaret: "Allah Akbar."

This prayer-crier is a striking figure as he stands upon his perch high above the town, his loose garments waving to the breeze, his head-gear of white riza coiled round his head like an embossed crown, and his long white beard suggestive of a patriarchal age now extinct.

The men who take up this profession must be of solemn demeanour, be able to quote profusely from the Koran, and have their minds stored with the theological poetry for purposes of chanting. It is not, however, a calling that precludes some indulgence in the world and the flesh, for whatever Islam may preach in theory it allows a man in practice, even when separated in a special way unto his religion, an outlet for his natural impulses despite the fact that these are frequently opposed to the other half of his life treated as holy.

Some of these men have extraordinarily powerful voices which range far beyond the

centre where they stand to call. I slept for several years in a room built on the roof of a house. No further away than the distance at which two people could converse in an ordinary tone of voice was a mosque. Early every morning—one of the prayer calls is just before dawn—I was awakened by the Mouden, who regularly, and in all kinds of weather, rung out his call over the sleeping town.

Sometimes—I suppose when the mood is with them, or on the opening day of a religious festival—they will chant for a long time, perhaps half an hour or longer. In the early morning, before the din of traffic has disturbed the city, this chanting is very alluring. It sounds, in the darkness, like a voice from eternity, reminding men that above them is their God waiting for that worship due to His Name. Imagine people sound asleep at dawn being awakened by this appeal to their religious sense: "God is great! God is great! Testify that there is no God but Allah. Testify that there is no God but Allah. Witness that Mohammed is His Prophet. Witness that Mohammed is His Prophet. Testify that there is no God but Allah, and that Mohammed is His Sent One. Oh, servants of God, give life

to prayer, for prayer is better than sleep."

The minaret places the Mouden in an advantageous position where he can easily be seen and heard. But this elevated position creates some embarrassment for the people who live in the houses surrounding the mosque, for these houses having uncovered courts are open to the gaze of the man on the minaret. Now, the Arabs are notoriously jealous of their wives, and for that reason have windowless houses, receiving light and air from the open court. These women are kept indoors as much as possible, and at times when they must go out, they are veiled. One would have imagined, however, that this jealousy would not have extended to the good man who is separated unto the office of calling his co-religionists to the worship of God. But it does. On most occasions the prayer call does not occupy more than a few minutes, but if some Mouden has the spirit of Peeping Tom he need not descend immediately after the performance of his duty, for there are loopholes and crevices from which secret gazing can be carried out with immunity. That is why some mosques have blind Moudens. But they are not all equipped with this advantage, for although

there are many blind men only a few have the voice requisite for such a work.

There is a pull about the human voice which no mechanical device can equal. The ringing of a bell as a means of calling people to the house of God is a tame affair compared with the vocal powers of man. It is God's most direct medium of reaching the heart of man. Here in our town a Roman Catholic Church and a Mosque are almost side by side. Sometimes their calls to worship are simultaneous. The bell and the human voice blend in their appeal to the heedless masses in the street, calling them to face the Unseen and give their souls a chance. Who understands a bell? asks the Moslem, with a touch of fanatical pedantry. Its use in the cinema, or something of that kind, as a means to draw and trap the ignorant masses he understands; but in the sphere of religion he treats it as an egregious violation of good sense.

The bell and the human voice; these two forces clash throughout North Africa to-day, representing as they do in this connection, two religious systems which have been at variance for long centuries, and which again and again have come to grips over their opposing creeds.

A glance at history will show us how in the contest the worst passions of man have been unleashed with resultant cruelty, shedding of blood and centuries of bitterness.

The tolling of the bell recalls the glorious history of the Church in North Africa, with its sturdy theologians and role of martyrs. The man on the minaret reminds us that his ancestors once broke through the confines of their desert home, and having unleashed their fanaticism threw their force against a large section of the Christian Church that had lost touch with reality, and was busy dabbling with fanciful dogmas. Later on, when the Arabs, in the course of their conquest, reached North Africa and saw Christian Churches everywhere, their fury knew no bounds. There was no question of purging the interior of these buildings from their Christian symbols, of displacing the Cross on the spire by the crescent, thus converting them to Mosques. No; these buildings provoked a challenge, the invaders accepted it and under the impact of their turbulent hatred for the Christian religion levelled everyone of them to the ground. This is the reproach of Islam. What is the Church doing to remove it?

It is a humiliating reflection that, in numerous cases, this man on the minaret is standing upon a pile of stones which once were formed into a Church by Christian hands, but which were demolished and used later on to build Mosques. Some of these stones now embedded in Mosques bear the Christian symbol of the Cross.

One day, in the course of itineration work, I reached a district where I succeeded in getting a large group of men together to hear the Gospel. When the meeting was over, I asked if the people in this place prayed and worshipped. The answer was in the negative. To the further question as to whether they had a Mosque in the district one man pointed to a tottering, roofless building, and remarked that the man who had ministered in this Mosque had been starved out of the place, and gone to seek other work. In numerous places which I visit I find the man of the minaret is having a lean time, and sometimes I am compelled to listen to doleful stories of the degeneration of these latter days.

In the town where I live investigation goes to show that not more than ten per cent.

of the male population answer the call to prayer, and much less than that for the dawn exercises. I wonder if the man of the minaret in our town will one day find himself on the dole?

CHAPTER XV

Arab View of this Life

ONE of the difficulties encountered in dealing with Arabs is their disregard for consistency. To the question: "What is this life?" one may get from the same man in the course of an hour's conversation, a dozen answers which, when gathered together form, not simply two opposite views, but a medley of conflicting definitions.

In the first place he will as likely as not reply that "only God knows," but give him a hearing and in a short time he will show that he believes that God has given away the secret, at least to him. It is an interesting question for Arabs, and I have often posed it, sometimes seriously, sometimes as a matter of curiosity.

If the man is a reader he will give us to begin with a Koranic definition: "This life is only a plaything." This definition does not necessarily exclude seriousness. Children may show great earnestness and exert themselves

to the utmost in their play, but it is non-productive, is merely an adjustment of feeling to the attraction of the moment. So with us, says the Arab; we are agitated by a variety of feelings, we adjust, or yield, ourselves to these, and are sad or hilarious, pleased or annoyed, good or bad, according to circumstances.

Life is not "a method, a progressive arrangement," where we begin, as it were, at the pointed end of a shell to make spiral ascent towards the top, where life is fuller and nobler. No; it has not got that regularity of progression. It is simply something with which to toy. This toying is a conspicuous element in Arab life, as for example, when Sidi Seventy marries Lilla Twelve. This is one example of many which it would be tedious to enumerate.

A scholar, whom I knew well, and who was always bemoaning the dearth of intelligence among his co-religionists, paid more compliments to mine than I wished to receive. He gathered knowledge—all of which was soaked in Islam—and was eager to give it outlet, and I frequently became his victim. But I profited from my contact with him, and learned much

of the twists and currents of Arab mentality in conversation we had about many subjects. On one occasion I said to him: "I have come to have a talk, and have brought with me the subject." He was delighted, for this afforded opportunity to display his ability to deal with a subject without any special preparation. "I want you to tell me what view you take of life, what you think it is worth in its relation to the past and the future, and towards what climax, if any, it moves." This request sounds big, but it was done intentionally to draw, if possible, a full reply.

His opening remark was a correction. I had used for "define this life," "beean leea hieat idoonia," and was informed it should be "oohach leea hieat." This was pedantry, I think, but I allowed it to pass.

Stripped of its embellishment, padding, and wanderings into side issues, his reply can be put briefly, thus: "This life is related to the next one, just as one half of a walnut is related to the other half. Running round the shell of a walnut, at its centre, is a line showing where the halves are joined. Push a knife through this line and the nut becomes parted. When opened it will frequently be found

that a worm has been imprisoned inside." Hence the saying: "Crack the walnut and the worm crawls out." (This saying is used among Arabs to hit off the man who appears to be a saint in the street, but whose relatives know him to be a rogue at home). Now, in many cases it will be found that the worm has confined itself to one half of the nut. This half is pierced in many parts where the worm has fed. Hundreds of tiny eggs are found in the furrows, and this has set up corruption, with the result that it is too bad to be eaten.

"You ask for my definition of life? This is it. Life is like a walnut. It has two distinct halves. In at that line which shows where we are bound the messenger of death pushes his knife and makes the division. As God will have it this life is corrupt. The worms of jealousy, hatred, spite, lust, and worldly desires have eaten into this half of our existence and corrupted it. But we do not despair of the mercy of God. The messenger of death cuts away this bad half—if we are Moslems—and leaves the pure portion for the joys of Paradise. Thus are we created, part for here, part for yonder."

Another man defined life as "a race to the

balances." This definition is based upon the Koranic text which warns men to beware of what they send on to the next world. The idea of weighing words and actions in the balances as a means of finding out a man's worth, is strong in Islamic theology. Words and deeds, the moment they are spoken and done, are beyond our control. They run off, enter into the balances in the other world, there to await our arrival. If a man's good deeds are heavier than his evil ones he shall be happy; but if evil outweighs the good he must be condemned. This doctrine is summed up in the saying: "Sherr wa kher, tasabak lilakher." The thought embodied in the words is that good and evil are competitors in a race towards the balances, each eager to weigh against the other. Concentration on this issue constitutes the major factor in our existence here, or at least ought to do so.

It will be noticed that this theory contradicts the one given above by the scholar, who conceives of evil in men, and its external working, as something inevitable, but which is confined to this side of life, being cut off at death and therefore never reaching the balances.

Sometimes one gets humorous answers: "It used to be a matter of driving donkeys, but is now an effort to dodge cars." Sometimes impatient ones: "Hight wa khight." I asked the man who gave this answer to elucidate his pithy definition. "Well," he said, "keep by the wall, away from danger. But precaution does not overcome all perils; so if you get torn—clothes, body, or soul—put on a patch. That's all that's in it." Sometimes solemn ones: "Life is a loan." Something we have had lent to us, which must be used and returned after a time. Whether we shall get a further loan when the time limit for this one expires, depends upon its condition when delivered up. This suggests conditional immortality.

A fairly common answer to this question can conveniently be put into the English words: "Clover here, clubbing yonder." The Arabs like to have a "good time," if they can afford it. And a good time for them usually implies sallies into the forbidden territory of sensuality. I have seen them many a time on the morning after they have emerged from their muddy orgy, and heard

them say as they did so: "There must be clubbing" (Labid min zerawata).

The ascetic replies in terms of patience. He not only believes in the life to come, but also in rewards and graded positions of honour. To such men life is like a ladder (Keysilum). Some men are hauled up on poultry, mutton, beef, wheaten bread, woollen mattresses, big houses, many wives, slaves, and shady gardens. In a word, they do not know what it is to climb the ladder laboriously step by step; they are hauled up as it were, on the good things of life. This is the easy way and you get there all right, but having had your portion in this life there is no reward in the next. But the ascetic who climbs patiently on a crust of bread, a single garment, and much suffering, gets all the good things when he reaches the top of the ladder. I have often enough stood at the side of this ladder, watched both classes mounting, and as they did so, have proclaimed this message in their hearing: "Ye must be born again."

These typical examples of replies received, show what a muddled thing Mohammedan theology is, and how hopeless is the religion that offers no redemption by the grace of God.

CHAPTER XVI

The Fatalism of the Arabs

THE Arabs are thorough-going fatalists. They hold with profound conviction the belief that the immutable procedure of fate cannot be successfully contested. "To-morrow" is not treated as something that may change our circumstances or modify our misfortunes; it is simply the time factor which moves us forward into contact with events irrevocably fixed. In their own words: "The future is past," because everything is already settled. The universe is like a gramophone record. It turns on the wheel of time, and with the passing moments liberates what it already possesses.

The application of this doctrine is not confined to matters of cataclysmic order which overlook and destroy masses of humanity; it is applied with equal emphasis to details too insignificant to draw from us more than a passing glance. The singeing of a moth is as

truly the working out of fate as the shifting of a mountain. To use another illustration of theirs in this connection: "Every man has his written scroll." As this scroll unfolds, its particulars become activities in his life. Triumph and tragedy with all their accompaniments and consequences are there.

To the Arabs, fate is absolute. It makes no compromise. They do not admit any of those subtle distinctions that treat war, famine and disease as the "penalties of violated functions"; nor would they allow that its mission is "to bring conduct up to the loftiness of nature."

> "Fate is the wind; we are the smoke;
> Its power upon us is absolute."

It cannot be harnessed to develop our characters, nor let loose to plague our enemies. It s not a "becoming," but an "unfolding."

When the Arabs try to explain this doctrine and its working out in daily human existence, they become bewilderingly inconsistent.

If we ask for a definition of fate we get, "Kadert Allah" (The power of God). In its last analysis it is the working out of "Ma sha Allah" (The will of God). To treat fate as something that may antagonise God, some-

thing separate from His Being, is blasphemy. There can be no antithesis between the two. An effort to get the Arabs to bring their beliefs on this subject to a focus point where they can be examined and pinned down, is like trying to fill a narrow-necked bottle with falling snow-flakes; indeed, it may be said that its chief attraction is its incomprehensibility.

In the spring of last year I had occasion to present myself at nearly a hundred Arab villages in North Africa. In some districts, both stone and lime were plentiful, yet all the people were living in straw huts or tents. When I asked why they did not set to work and build themselves houses that would afford them privacy and proper shelter, with sanitary arrangements that would keep epidemics at bay, they reminded me that what God wills and what works out in fate are perfectly coincident; so that had He willed they should build there could be no discordant factor to prevent fate from fulfilling its purpose in regard to both the act and time of its achievement. God's will working through the instrumentality of fate has brought together in abundance—so they went on to say—stone and lime in this place, but it has not been

decreed that we should apply a method to turn these into dwellings.

When I remarked that all this was nothing more than a circuitous way of saying they were too lazy to work, they retorted that even if this were so the circuitous route they had taken to explain their attitude was also decreed!

I then tested them with the following questions: "Do you agree with me when I say that God is good; Perfect beyond possibility of error?"

"One of our names for God is 'Ilkamil';" (The Perfect One), they replied.

"Now, I have lived among you people for nearly twenty-five years, and know that you lie, steal, take false oaths, and sometimes commit murder. Would you agree that such things are evil?"

They agreed that these were evils, and added that the Koran had warned them of the consequences sure to follow in their train.

"But you assert," I continued, "that when such evils have been done among you they were decreed."

"Otherwise they could not have been," came the spirited reply.

"Who decreed that these evil practices should be prevalent among you?"

One man, in an effort to escape the conclusion, blurted out: "God curse Sheetan."

"Amen," I replied, "but I'm still waiting for an answer to my question."

"You must think we are very ignorant since you ask if we agree that murder is wrong. We are not barbarians," said another in an effort to confuse the issue.

"The question is——" I was cut short. One of the men, seeing escape was impossible, said: "All is fated; murder, adultery, and all the other evils."

"By whom?" I persisted.

"Who could decree them except God. There is no God but He, and Mohammed is His Prophet," continued the last speaker.

"Then God who is the Perfect One decrees evil such as rape, murder, etc.?"

"He only decrees what is perfect."

"In that case we must treat every form of evil as a manifestation of His perfect will?"

"This subject is too deep for you Europeans," came the evasive reply. And so we talked on, I being amused, confused, and irritated in turn. All my arguments, however sound,

in passing through the crucible of their mentality were pounded into a hash and presented in a form too elusive to grasp.

But fatalism, despite its contradiction and elusiveness, has its compensations. There is little or no nervous disease among the Arabs; this is due in large measure, if not entirely, to their power of resignation. A ripple of anticipation may be noticeable on their features as they approach and watch their scroll unfold itself, especially in times of emergency or crisis, but when the inevitable is revealed they cease to worry. Their resignation is not necessarily into a state of peace or contentment. It is as a matter of fact, in cases of misfortune, a surrender to vacuity.

Highly civilised people find defeat in any sphere a bitter experience. The loss of wealth, health, position, or power, becomes a worm that wriggles its way through to the core of their life where it sets up an irritation that plays havoc with their nervous systems. They often endeavour to camouflage the consequences of disaster by the use of a stifling drapery which adds to the strain caused by defeat.

Such an attitude towards life is foreign to

the Arabs. Here is a man whose misfortunes have deprived him of wealth and power. Down he comes from palace to poverty, from the snuggery of the harem to the stifling atmosphere of a straw hut, from his soft cushions to the bare soil. As he bends his body to enter the door of his new home he utters his "Bismillah" to sanctify it in God's Name. Then down he sits in a corner, and after giving a glance at his surroundings, lifts his rosary and utters his, "Ma sha Allah." He believes not only that a tussle with fate is hopeless, but also that complaint against his misfortunes, decreed by God, is unlawful. That is the theory he holds; needless to say it does not work out consistently and constantly in practice, for the disappointed and fallen Arab awakens occasionally from the coma of his resignation to throw about his darts with indiscriminate fury.

Here is another man whose health is gone. A too passionate youth has drained his vitality and aged him prematurely. It may be decreed that his health should be restored; but he does not know. Believing, however, that man may be the medium (ilaabid sabab) through which healing is fated to flow he has con-

sulted doctors and taken medicines. All in vain. His weakness increases with the passing days. His belated efforts to retrieve what was so lavishly thrown away on youth are inadequate. Unable to walk he is upheld in the arms of two men who bear him to his desired haven—a saint's tomb. Here he finds a corner among many others in a plight similar to his own. There he will lie to suffer or die, and every pain that stings his body meets his challenge in "Ma sha Allah."

It is not an uncommon thing for a man, once rich and popular but now driven to seek shelter and alms at a shrine, to make occasional sallies into the street to display his rags and poverty where once he flouted his wealth. As he moves along, men laugh and leer into his face. They remember his haughtiness, and now that he is powerless, seek to take what little revenge they may.

But although he may be chagrined by this touch of persecution it is what he desires, and what he has come out to seek. Why? Because he has now reached that stage in life where only one thing matters, namely, God's forgiveness for a past life of sin. This he hopes to obtain either in whole or part by a process

of suffering. He holds the belief that the consequences of his evil deeds may be averted by subjecting himself to a process of suffering commensurate with his crimes.

Then what about the written scroll? Does not this effort to obtain remission of sins clash with what he asserts about fate? The last line in the scroll will declare the man is forgiven or announce that he must face up to the stark consequences of his sins. In that case all effort to obtain forgiveness by whatsoever means is at once a foolish and hopeless work.

The reply which the Arabs make to this argument, under various metaphors and similies, is this: "A man buys a bird in a cage. His home is in a distant land. As he travels by land and sea the bird flutters and jumps about, and occasionally dashes itself against the bars of its prison; but this expenditure of energy has not the slightest effect upon the direction or speed of the medium that bears it irresistibly towards its destined end."

Man is born in a cage, fate takes it up and bears it onward past all obstacles and defences. The man may resign himself or rebel, but not one of his moves has, or can have, the slightest influence upon the direction and ultimate

destiny towards which he is being carried along. Man, however, is not, in most cases, able to sit down and calmly await the unfolding of events. His mind gives way to the license of curiosity and conjecture which agitates and leads him into endeavours which aim at securing boons too elusive to be captured by either his faith or works.

All this is very inconsistent and unsatisfactory to minds accustomed to clear and logical reasoning. But fatalism as believed and explained by Arabs cannot be snared by a syllogism.

And here another difficulty comes into view, namely, how to reconcile this belief with the teaching of the Koran. Numerous passages support the fatalistic idea, but many more run counter to it. Chief among these are the oft-quoted words from the chapter entitled, "The Earthquake," thus: "Whoever performs a good deed, small as an ant though it be, shall be rewarded; and whoever does an evil deed, small as an ant though it be, shall be punished." According to these words a man's destiny hinges upon the exercise of his choice for good or evil. The same conclusion must be drawn from "The Balances," in which

actions are weighed, and which Mohammed brought to the foreground of his theology again and again. That is why the Arab, having stolen something, will give a portion of his unlawful gains to the poor to keep the balance in his favour, or at least, from weighing too heavily against him.

A hundred times I have asked Arabs how they propose to reconcile these doctrines which hail them in opposite directions and so make surrender to both impossible. A hundred times I have received the reply: "God is the Great Reconciler of inconsistencies."

To us this appears to be just so much verbal fencing; while to them our demand for definitions that will harmonise with our reasoning is an exhibition of our infidelity rather than our honesty. The Arabs will not capitulate to the limitations of reason any more than they will allow their religious beliefs to be dominated by the despotic demands of logic.

To prove to them that their Koran and lives are infested with inconsistencies, is to present them with an opportunity of showing the greatness of God in His bridging of such chasms.

CHAPTER XVII

Lapses in Language

ARABIC is a difficult language for Europeans. To make anything of it, one must begin to study and use it when still young. Even then it takes years of practice before one feels at ease in conversation. Several of the letters have no equivalents in English, and failure to pronounce these properly frequently leads to amusing incidents.

There are two K's in Arabic; one sounded as in English, while the other coming from the back of the throat is sounded like a strong "Kaw." A missionary was once preaching to a young man, urging him, as she thought, to get a new heart. The lady, however, failed to give the kaw sound which belongs to the word heart, and by using the English "K" it became dog. The young man was struck by the lady's earnestness but puzzled by her insistence that, to get to Heaven, he must get a new dog!

I recall another mix-up with these two K's in the following circumstances. A young missionary was being entertained in the house of an Arab. The former, after eating and drinking, felt he would not be true to his mission if he came away without saying a word for his Master. At a suitable pause he asked his host—or thought he was asking him—if he was a reader. "No," he replied, "it is mine." The missionary could not connect this answer with his question, but he took it that the use of the negative indicated inability to read. "Then why don't you learn to read?" "One is enough for me," was the reply given to this question. Again there seemed to be no connection between query and response. "One what?" asked the missionary. "Hadi neet," (just this one), said the Arab. The conversation became so muddled that it had to be cut off abruptly.

Long afterwards the missionary saw the cause of confusion. Failure on his part to give the kaw sound to the word, read, changed it to the word hire. So, while the missionary was dealing with the question of reading books, the Arab was dealing with the hiring of houses.

Strange to relate I have seen, on more than one occasion, this process reversed and the kaw sound given where the English was required. The confusion that followed was the same; the two speakers misunderstanding each other because they were dealing in their minds with different objects.

The word for frogs is "Jiran," while that for neighbours is "Jeeran." One afternoon, a lady, armed with a few months' study of Arabic went out to attempt her first bit of preaching. She called at a house a few doors from the mission premises. The inmates of the house were not sure who she was, or at least not sure as to the purpose of her visit. In an effort to break through the stiffness caused by suspicion the lady thought the best thing to do was to mention that they were neighbours. But she made a slip and used "Jiran" instead of "Jeeran," with the result that she said smilingly: "Why, don't you know me? We are your frogs!"

I went into a shop one day and asked for sixpence of olive oil. Now the word for olive oil is "I'louad," while that for a horse is "I'lowed." The shopkeeper told me with a smile that he had no horses to sell at sixpence.

I had given the "ow" where the "ou" sound was required.

In Arabic, "I have had my supper," is "Killeet ilaasha," and, "I have had a beating," is "Killeet ilaasa." One can understand why when a young man was being pressed to eat with some Arabs, they looked surprised when he slipped the "H", and instead of saying as he intended, that he could eat no more because he had had his supper, said he could eat no more because he had just been beaten.

I was present in a meeting one afternoon, when a gentleman was endeavouring to teach some thirty lads the chorus: "Joy, joy, joy, with joy my heart is singing." He was a Scotsman, and I admired his courage in attempting such a thing, for he had not been long at the study of Arabic. He introduced the "ch" of his native tongue, as in "loch," into the word "joy" instead of the Arabic "H" which is sounded like a deep sigh. This turned the word "joy" into the word "birds" with the result that we had the class singing boisterously: "Birds, birds, birds, with birds my heart is singing!"

I remember another meeting where the speaker got into difficulties over the words

"Ilhimm" (worry), and "Illihim" (beef). By using the latter word where he intended to use the former, he said: "The world is full of beef." "We country Arabs get it once a week," interjected one of the audience. The speaker unconscious of his slip went on: "Why should we have beef? We can be saved from it." "May Allah bring more of it," requested one of the audience.

Some forty boys gathered in a class, were being urged to read the Bible. I could not fail to notice that they were not interested. But when the teacher, nearing the end of his address, slipped on the words "Hooiesh," and "Hooiej," they wakened up and began to pass knowing smiles and nudges among themselves. The preacher thought he said: "The things (hooiej) of the Bible are good; whereas he actually said: "The evil spirits (hooiesh) of the Bible are good."

The distinction between "rijel" (foot), and "rajel" (man) is not difficult to make. Yet I have, on more than one occasion, seen and heard strange things where the one has been substituted for the other unconsciously. I recall how one man began to read the story of the prodigal son, thus: "A certain foot had

two sons." Had it read: "A certain foot had five sons," that would have been quite intelligible to the audience, for the Arabs speak of the foot as "the father of the toes." But a certain foot with two toes was to them a freak.

A lady in conversation with an Arab was explaining to him that the reason he had not seen her about the town for a long time, was because she had been in England on holiday. To say, as she intended, "I remained in England six months," the word "buckeet" should have been used, which means to remain; but instead the word "backeet" was used which is the verb to weep. When, therefore, she said that she had wept six months in England it was not surprising that he imagined she had been terribly homesick for Morocco, and added, "misskeen," which being interpreted means, poor thing!

At the close of a meeting for boys, and just as they were going out, a lad asked when the next meeting would be. "Next candle day" (shmaa) was the reply, which should have been "next Friday" (jmaa). The boys saw the slip, out they rushed to the street shouting amid peals of laughter: "Next meeting is on candle-day."

In one meeting the lesson chosen for reading was Matthew 22. 28. There we have the narrative of the woman who married seven brothers. In Arabic the word for brothers is "khot." The "K" at the beginning of the word as written in English represents a dot over the first letter in Arabic. The dot gives the word a gutteral sound. The word for fish is spelt in the same way as that for brothers except that it lacks the dot over the first letter. The reader in this case, failed to take into account the significance of this dot, with the result that the audience were treated to the extraordinary story of a woman who married seven fish. Naturally they were not surprised to learn that they died one after the other without leaving any children! The mystery was only deepened when it was stated that in the resurrection none of these fish would be allowed to claim the woman as their wife!

The word for money is "filoos," and by doubling the "L" thus, "filloos" we have the word for chickens. At a time when I did not know the word for young hens, and always used the word poultry, "iddjaz," I picked up three chickens which were tied together and made an offer of five francs for them. The

owner was angry and considered the offer so small as to be an insult. "Give me my chickens" (filloos), he demanded angrily. Thinking he had used the word for money (filoos), I produced five francs. It was refused. "Why do you say," I asked, "'give me the money,' and then refuse after saying you would accept it?"

"I said, give me my 'filloos,'" he vociferated.

"Well, here is the filoos I offered and you agreed to accept," I said with a puzzled look. He jerked the birds impatiently from my hand and departed with a growl.

Natives use the religious expression: "This is a passing world, the next, a permanent one." One day, when speaking to a class of boys, I used the expression at the end of my address, but slipped on the last word, using "ilbaka" (weeping), instead of "ilbucka" (permanent). "This is a passing world, the next a weeping one," was what I said. The boys noticed the slip, and always being ready for fun began to rub their eyes and feign weeping.

A sick woman called at one of our dispensaries one day. The senior missionary in charge being absent, a young member of the staff

took on the case. His first question to the woman was: "What do you wish?" or, at least, was intended to be so. The verb to "wish" in Arabic contains a sound which has no equivalent in English, and is usually represented by "gh" when written. He failed to give this sound, and in doing so actually asked: "Are you cured?" For the difference between the verb to wish and the verb to be cured is indicated by this difficult sound. "Bereetee," "Bgheetee." "No, I am not cured," replied the patient. The dispenser thinking she had said: "I don't wish anything," asked her why she had come. "For medicine," she replied, "I am ill with malaria." "But you have just told me you are cured," he went on, attributing the muddle to her stupidity and not his own defective Arabic. Things got into a rare tangle and he ultimately gave her some medicine to get rid of her.

The similarity between "anguish" and "cock" can be seen in English lettering thus: for the former we have "deak," and for the latter, "deek." The "ak" in the first word represents a sound without an English equivalent. It is easy enough to slip this and fall

into "deek." What did the audience think, then, when on one occasion Psalm 119. 143 was read to them with this slip? "Trouble and a cock have taken hold of me."

"Irrjaa" is the root of the verb to return, while "Irrja" is the root of the verb to hope. The double "aa" in the first word represents one of the most difficult sounds in Arabic for Europeans. A hundred times, and more, I have heard natives being encouraged to hope when it was intended to ask them to return.

The same difference occurs between "to fill" and "to command." For the former we have "aamer," and for the latter "amer." "Command this pail," is an expression of frequent occurrence. Fortunately many natives have learned to make allowances for these slips otherwise the situation would at times become hopeless.

CHAPTER XVIII

A Moorish Street

IN a long, narrow, tortuous street that winds about like a stream among the hills, with here and there a cup-shaped doorway or window, after the manner of Moorish architecture, some seventy men sit in shops that resemble boxes set on end with the lids taken off. Civilisation, working in different parts of our town, has wrought many changes; but it could not include this street within the scope of its activities. It is too ancient and frail for a drastic operation. The only alternative to pulling it down altogether was to leave it alone. And so it has been left to the pleasures of its own primitiveness.

Here is none of that colliding competition found in other quarters of the town now modernised; none of that bullying people into buying things they do not want, and for which they have no use.

Now and again I pass through the street,

loitering here and there to listen to the intricacies of native dialogue which always develop along the line of theology and finally run into the cul-de-sac of Fatalism. The men squatted in their shops "like their grandfathers cut in alabaster," seem to be so constituted, mentally, that their most pleasurable feelings are produced by lowering the eyes and focusing them on the point of the nose. In this attitude they will sit for long spells as if entranced. This attitude is often called by the high-sounding name of contemplation. As a matter of fact it is, in four cases out of five, a most luxurious form of laziness! The man has all but ceased to function.

It is amusing to see how a customer may be treated by a shopkeeper in this mood. Down goes the coin on the counter: "Give me three soldee of tea and two of sugar."

"Ma aandish" (haven't got it) comes the mumbled reply.

"You haven't got it?"

"Try the next shop."

"But there's tea and sugar on your shelf"

"Allah curse your ancestors! I said to you try the next shop!"

The next person who arrests our attention

is a veiled woman, shuffling along, goggle-eyed, out to do her shopping. "What is it?" asks the shopkeeper surlily.

"God is," she replies.

"Far be it from me," he says, with the air of one who has just made a great discovery, "that I should attribute partners to Him."

"Nothing happens but by His permissive will," adds the lady.

"I praise Him, He created me a male."

"He who created you also created the donkey," she retorts.

Having finished their theological thrusts they get to business which may only be a farthing's worth of carrots.

At the next shop a little girl has just arrived. "Mother says a halfpenny worth of tea and the same of sugar."

The shopkeeper draws his hand down the length of his beard in an agitated gesture: "God is great," he says solemnly.

"And I want a sweetie for nothing," breaks in the little girl.

"Allah! Allah! he exclaims, as he gets up from his reclining position. "What is this in expensive days like these? A penny between

tea and sugar, and a sweetie to the bargain. May Allah preserve us."

A sharp reminder that "mother is waiting," brings him to business. "All right, my pretty gazelle. You shall have the tea and sugar, and the sweetie, too." The Moor loves children. Put a child in his lap and he becomes like it in gentleness and affection.

There are numerous beggars in this street. Here is one calling out for "God's revenue" (aaiet Allah). About him he has odds and ends gathered during the day; a few sweet potatoes, carrots, bits of charcoal, etc. A rough, country Arab stops in front of him. Thrusting his hand into a deep leather bag dangling by his side, he searches for a coin. As he searches he takes occasional looks about him to see if he is getting due recognition for his meritorious act. Meanwhile the beggar is calling down blessings upon his head. "May Allah save you from a futile law-suit, and bless you with prosperity."

The Arab's bag is a receptacle for many things as well as money, and the copper coin cannot always be found in a moment. On he rummages, and meanwhile a group of curious children have gathered to see how much the

beggar is going to get. Then out comes an "aashuraju" (copper coin), as laboriously as if he were hauling a sack of flour from a cellar. He cannot afford to give as much as that. He hands it to the beggar with, "take this, and give me half back." The beggar now begins to search for a small coin to return. He, too, has a leather bag, patched here and there, and with layers of oily dirt over it sufficient to grow a crop of grass.

As he searches, the Arab employs himself praising God. "Praise be to the Only God in Whose hand we are, and by Whose hand all things exist." The beggar has found the coin. The Arab drops it in his bag and goes off, with a swing that bespeaks satisfaction. What a fuss over a farthing!

The street has its own place of worship. Not exactly a Mosque for there is no tower or minaret attached to it. A little man with a white beard, and a heavy rosary dangling from his neck is now on the roof of this building. His face to the East he is calling out: "Come to prayer, oh Faithful." I notice that only about one in three go to prayer. These, stiff with sitting, waddle out of their shops like unbalanced ducks. Having got out they look

up and down the street, put the padlock on the door, shake their garments, draw their fingers through their beards, and then, with lowered eyes, proceed toward the place of prayer.

Through the open window one can see their movements and hear their words. A line of faces can be seen bent right down to the floor. It is complete prostration. In unison rises the confession: "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet. To Him be praise for the Perspicuous Book." Back they get to their feet, again to mumble more monotonous prayers. Having finished these exercises they sit cross-legged on the floor to tell the beads of their rosary. Now that one can see their faces, one is struck by their awed expression which suggests that for the time being these men have drifted into another realm. It is a scene calculated to effect a stranger with eeriness.

Are these the same men, one asks, who keep several girl wives and concubines? Is it possible that any one of them may, before the day has closed, break his oath, taken in God's Name, with a laugh and an odd gesture? Are these the men we heard hurling curses at each other in the earlier part of the day, cudgelling

each other with their tongues? Yes, the same men. How do they reconcile, or explain, these moral lapses with the gravity displayed in the house of prayer? By the division of man's nature. Religion being a debt (something one owes God), it ought to be discharged without reference to character. A debtor is never relieved of his debts on the ground that he is morally bad. In like manner God expects us to pay our religious obligations without necessarily relating them to our moral delinquencies. The problem, therefore, of relating creed to conduct does not exist.

There is a school attached to this place of worship. Squatted on the floor, and jammed together in a manner that compels them to keep their elbows in front of them, are some forty boys between the ages of four and twelve. The curriculum is the Koran—nothing more. As each boy is memorising a different section of the book according to age or progress, and all in a loud voice, the scene can only be adequately described in terms of pandemonium.

Reclining in a corner is the master, dozing for the most part, actually sleeping at times, now and then raising himself to a sitting posture to whip his pupils into form. Now

and then I have a talk with him. He sighs for the good old days when a man could whip his wife and she had no court of appeal beyond his mercy; when half a dozen boys in his class were fettered with irons, and one could live in one's own house without having to pay a tax for the privilege of doing so. "Life under European control makes me feel like a beetle that has wandered into an ant's nest. A multitude of petty restrictions gnaw at my soul and drain my life of all interest. But Allah remains." Such is his estimate of the benefits of civilisation.

The street boasts a band. It is a crude collection of drums and wind instruments. The wind instruments seem to be full of demons which are blown out in hot succession with wild screeches, while the drummers compete with one another in an effort to see who will give the most whacks in a minute. It is called out on special occasions, such as the return of a pilgrim from Mecca, a marriage, or the birth of a male child. The children love it. At the first sound of the drums out they tumble from their homes, and having linked themselves together arm in arm, take to a wild form of dancing. They keep up a muffled howl like

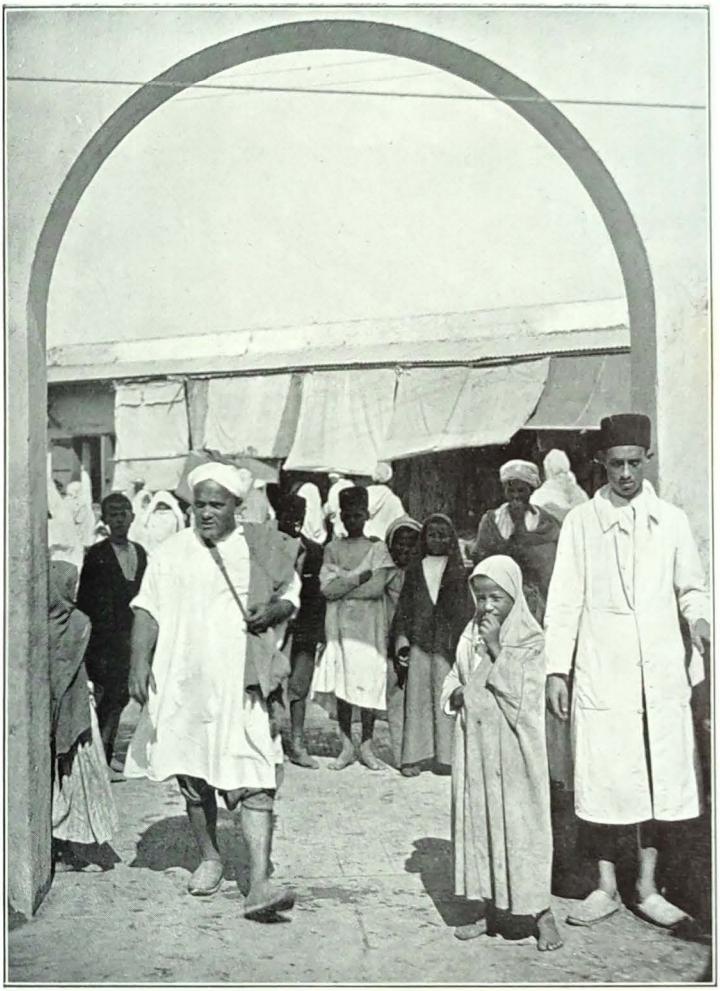
the sound of rumbling thunder, patter the ground with their feet, leap into the air, twirl their garments, jerk their heads backwards and forwards with corybantic fervour until their vitality is drained and they finish by rolling on the ground.

It is characteristic of this people that, although displaying a dislike for exertion, they can, in certain conditions, work themselves into a frenzy where they can give off as much energy in the course of an hour as they would use up in the course of a week's work.

The children have their games, and this street being too narrow for motor traffic is a safe place to play. Marbles is a favourite game with the boys. But the lack of discipline vitiates all. Most of the time is spent in protesting to one another against the infringement of the rules. Play works out something like this: "Put down the marbles," vociferates a big boy. "What if I don't want to?" queries one in a spirited tone of challenge.

"God smite you with dizziness you son of rascality," says the first boy. "And you with smallpox," replies the second.

They rush at each other, throwing their



A MOORISH MARKET PLACE

THE CUSTOM HOUSE, MAZAGAN

arms above their heads in a threatening posture.

"May God reconcile you," says another boy, who is eager to see the game proceed. Down go the marbles. A few rounds of the game and there is a division between winners and losers. The former become boisterous and urge more pace into the play; the latter snarl and seek to console themselves with a Koranic text: "La ghalab ila Allah" (There is no victory but by God).

One who has lost his last marble rushes at an opponent's throat. "Shunic," they call this throat-gripping business. While others are butting in and trying to settle this matter another loser lifts several marbles. In the act of bolting he is tripped up. In the *melee* that follows, a boy here and there may be seen pinned to the wall with another lad's knee on his stomach, others have been caught by their "gurn" (kind of pig-tail) and are being whirled round and round like a top, while here and there blows are being landed on the back of the heads of those busy facing opponents.

Football is another favourite game. Their play makes me rock with laughter. It resembles

thirty or forty fowls all in chase after a single one that has picked up a tit-bit!

"Appalling language these boys use," I remarked to a shopkeeper who was watching (in an attitude of one who is bored at a play visited for the hundredth time), some boys playing marbles. "Sons of rascality," he remarked lazily. To which I added for his benefit: "As the old cock crows the young one learns." But he escaped the personal application of my remark by reminding me that, "cocks can crow only by the power of God!"

Frequently one may see in our street what is called a "Libta." This is a procession in which there is a hand cart drawn by a man. It contains brass candlesticks, mattresses, carpets, silk head-dresses, hold-all boxes, and a number of other odds and ends. In front of the cart a number of closely veiled women are carrying palmetto baskets on their heads, while behind is the band and a crowd of dancing children.

Everybody has a good look at the contents of the cart which compose the trousseau of a girl of twelve or fourteen who is to be married in the evening. No one but close relatives may see her, so by way of compensation for

this loss they are allowed to stand and stare at the articles she is now sending to the home where for the first time she will see the man who is to be her husband. It is not a binding affair. The couple will carry out an experiment in living together. If they like each other and find they can live in tolerable harmony they may carry on for some years together, in some rare cases for life. But if the man is disappointed with his wife's manner or appearance he may divorce her at the end of a few days or weeks. Hence their saying:

"Seven short days of joy and laughter;
After that there comes disaster."

A stranger walking through this quarter would wonder why so many shops and houses have carved, or painted, upon their doors, the figure of a hand.

Well, the people are very superstitious. They believe they have enemies, some in the form of demons, others in the more tangible form of neighbours. They believe that when anyone wishes evil against another that such wishes often materialise. Evil spirits when cast out of a person, whether by enchantment or medicine, prowl about in search of another victim, where they may re-embody themselves.

So with sickness. It may be expelled, but cannot be extinguished. No sooner is it conquered than it begins the search for another home.

The figure of a human hand is supposed to be effacacious in counteracting the ravages of hatred and revenge. It is found on doors, horses' hips, women's breasts, and sometimes on utensils.

If one asks them, as I have often done, how they as Fatalists, reconcile this practice of trying to ward off evil, with their belief that all is ordered, their answer is ready: "It is decreed that we accept beliefs and practices which are contradictory."

Of course, the people of our street have their quarrels. These sometimes develop into terrific clashes, not of blows, but of words. Vituperation is poured forth with volcanic fury. The language used in these circumstances could not be translated into English without doing violence to our sense of decency. But "God is easy to be reconciled," and so are His servants. I have more than once witnessed a jungle scene in the forenoon, temporising in the afternoon, then friendliness, accompanied by feasting in the evening. Again and again

I have seen a group of these men and women after having quarrelled in a most vicious manner for an hour, snarling at each other like a pack of wolves, suddenly break out into laughter and finish by throwing their arms affectionately round one another. There is a perplexing yet winsome duality about their nature, the explanation of which must be looked for in their theology.

It is characteristic of Moorish nature that it displays its moods. If one is sad, why expend energy in an effort to convince others to the contrary? If a merchant has suffered loss in the day's business why walk home with the tread of one who has triumphed? Except in cases where camouflage is necessary the heart advertises its condition on the man's countenance. That is why one may frequently meet a man in our street slouching home, gesticulating and rehearsing his defeats to himself; or another, head erect, beaming and boisterious over some trick that has trapped an enemy, or successful deal that has brought gain.

Sometimes we see a man sitting on his doorstep waiting for news. The door opens and a voice announces that, "God has brought him

another girl." Another girl! What a disappointment! The man wilts like a flower that has been dropped into boiling water. But this surrender to moods, however weak and demoralising it may appear to those trained to a severe discipline of themselves, has its compensations. For when disappointments and irritation are run off in dejection, the nervous system is relieved of the strain. That is why nervous collapse is almost unknown among this people.

It may sound paradoxical, but I am sure it is so that these people enjoy their spells of gloom and depression. The feeling that all is hopeless, that nothing is worth while, finds a ready response in their temperamental make-up:

> "All my joys to this are folly;
> None so sweet as melancholy."

But hark! Here is another scene familiar enough in our street. A procession of men is moving forward in solemn mien. As they move they chant antiphonally:

> "Oh Lord, we seek Thy favour,
> And we are standing at Thy gate.
> To pity us there is none other;
> Oh Merciful and Compassionate."

Leading the way is a TALIB (a kind of Moslem clergyman). Behind him is a bier, and the covering shows that the dead person is a woman. There are no tears. "God lent this woman a body to cover her spirit for a season. The period is up and He has taken it back." Such is the simple explanation of death given me by one of the mourners.

Such is our street. It differs much from those of other lands and places. But out of the tangled mesh of its manners and customs, joys and sorrows, there merges the great salient facts of human existence common everywhere: birth, marriage, and death.

CHAPTER XIX

Tent Sins and Den Sins

I WAS sitting in a field with an elderly Arab. He was a good reader, and was interested in the contents of a tract I had given him. In spite of the fact that the tract dealt with the fundamentals of the Gospel he failed to see that there was anything irreconcilable between its message and that contained in his own book, the Koran. He seemed to be able to read: "Jesus died for our sins," and ejaculate almost in the same breath: "There is no God but God, and Mohammed is His Prophet," without being conscious of any clash in the claims made by these two Persons.

As we were conversing together a big spider crawled up from under a stone. I drew his attention to this visitor which was of the dangerous type—Tarantula.

"May Allah preserve us!" he exclaimed. I took up a stone to kill it, but my aim was faulty and missed. "Just as well you missed

him," he said, "for if you had killed him other members of his family would have taken revenge on you." This superstitious fear is common among the country Arabs.

This visitor provided my Arab friend with an opportunity to preach. Those who have had familiar contact with Arabs know how easily and naturally they seize upon a material object and make it a blackboard to illustrate some spiritual truth. Some of these illustrations are pointed and telling; others retain all the quaintness and distinctiveness of their primitive minds.

He began: "There are two kinds of spiders. The Owner of the tent, and the Owner of the den. The Owner of the tent is an agile fellow, knits the meshes of his tent about the bushes and corners of houses, and then takes up a hidden position to wait for the victims that God may bring him. He is not exactly harmless to man, but neither is he dangerous. But the other fellow of the underground den, well, if he stings you it's 'swerty' (chance) if you live or die."

He saw something in this which had a bearing on the conversation we were pursuing together when our visitor arrived. There was a pause.

I said nothing, for I could see from his attitude that his mind was working and that he had more to say. Then, lifting his head he proceeded: "Kine sherr ilkhozana wa sherr ilghar" (there are tent sins and den sins). Another pause, and again he takes to preaching.

"Allah pronounces judgment against sin, but not in a manner that precludes some indulgence." Then making his way round a circuit of assumption about the attitude of God towards the failings of men, he reached the conclusion that there is an excusable laxity of morals: "These," he went on, "are the tent sins; not exactly harmless, but neither are they dangerous. A lie is a den sin. It is deadly. But we Moslems—thanks to the leniency of our Prophet, upon whom be peace and prayers—are allowed an hundred equivocations before coming to the actual lie. You Europeans often accuse us of lying when in fact we are doing no more than exercising the privilege of equivocating. These equivocations are like the meshes of the spider's tent; they facilitate our efforts to make money, and get us out of difficulties and entanglements with our fellows without a rupture of friendship."

He went on to give an example of how this

works out in practice. "A man comes to me and wishes to borrow a kheroba of grain. I know something of the man, and do not trust him, but at the same time I know he has the power to do me harm and therefore I do not wish to see a rupture of our friendship. Now, if I said blankly that I did not trust him he would be offended. So to save myself from loss of both goods and friendship I have recourse to legitimate equivocations; I say I have no grain. He replies that he knows I have got it stored in my silos. I inform him that I have a heavy debt to discharge and all the grain I have will be required to meet my creditor's demands. These are not den lies, they are tent ones. One equivocates to evade trouble.

He paused, and I seized the opportunity to make a remark: I pointed out that this kind of reasoning was singularly inept and feeble, calculated to drain away all meaning from truth. He was disappointed that I had not been impressed. So he made another effort with a more spectacular theme.

"A man who yokes himself to one wife for a lifetime, as you Europeans do, stultifies the natural propensities of his nature. Now I have had several wives, but never had money

or accommodation to keep more than one at a time. So always before marrying a new wife I had to get rid of the old one."

I interrupted him to suggest that by "old one" he meant a woman of about twenty-five. "Zide nuks" (more or less), he replied with a smile. But he was impatient to proceed.

"In every case where I desired a divorce I began picking a quarrel, worked it until it became violent and when it was at its height, walked out, and got a notary to write a letter of divorce. After all, a woman is nothing, and these quarrels are only tent sins."

"Perhaps your wives put them in the category of den sins?" I suggested. He gave me a glance of insolent disapproval.

"Well, what about the den sins?" I asked.

"There is only one den sin." This was a contradiction of what he had already said: but one cannot leash an Arab to the line of logic. It was evident that as his preaching was reaching finality his fanaticism was stirring. "What is this one den sin?" I asked. Yes, the man had changed from a pleasant conversationalist to a religious bigot.

The jerky motion of his lips revealed his resolve to make as heavy a thrust as possible

against the infidel. He made it with a classical quotation: "Ya khir ilwara Sharifa" (this is a reference to Mohammed as being the quintessence of mankind).

Then bowing his head and patting the ground with the palm of his hand, he said: "The den sin is refusal to believe that!"

As a Christian missionary I could not allow things to end there. So I asked: "Murder, adultery, perjury, theft—are these not den sins?" "They may be," he replied snappishly, "but there is medicine."

The medical application which he detailed was all on the principle of "stealing a goose and then finding pardon by giving away the giblets."

His courteous reception of a portion of the New Testament before I left him was some consolation to me at the end of an hour's talk, as was also his invitation to come and see him again.

CHAPTER XX

Prisoners and Pomegranates

ARABS, when provoked, can make a terrific display of temper. When caught in the current of a quarrel their words explode like thunder while their gestures resemble flashes of lightning. These quarrels are seldom confined to the opposing parties where they originated, for the onlookers begin to intermeddle and take sides, these disturbances affording opportunity to pay off some standing grudge against one or other of the parties at variance. Not infrequently, then, a quarrel begun between two develops into a small-scale war between opposing camps.

If, on such an occasion, the hatred and energy that finds vent in words and gestures were directed into blows there would be a liberal flow of blood. But anger being drained into the channel of vociferation usually finds sufficient vent there, and is thus prevented from overflowing its banks into a wider field

of blows and bloodshed. There are, of course, numerous cases of violence and outrage, but these are small in number compared with the type of quarrel which is simply a rotary rowdyism gushing out periodically from suppressed feelings of jealousy and disappointment.

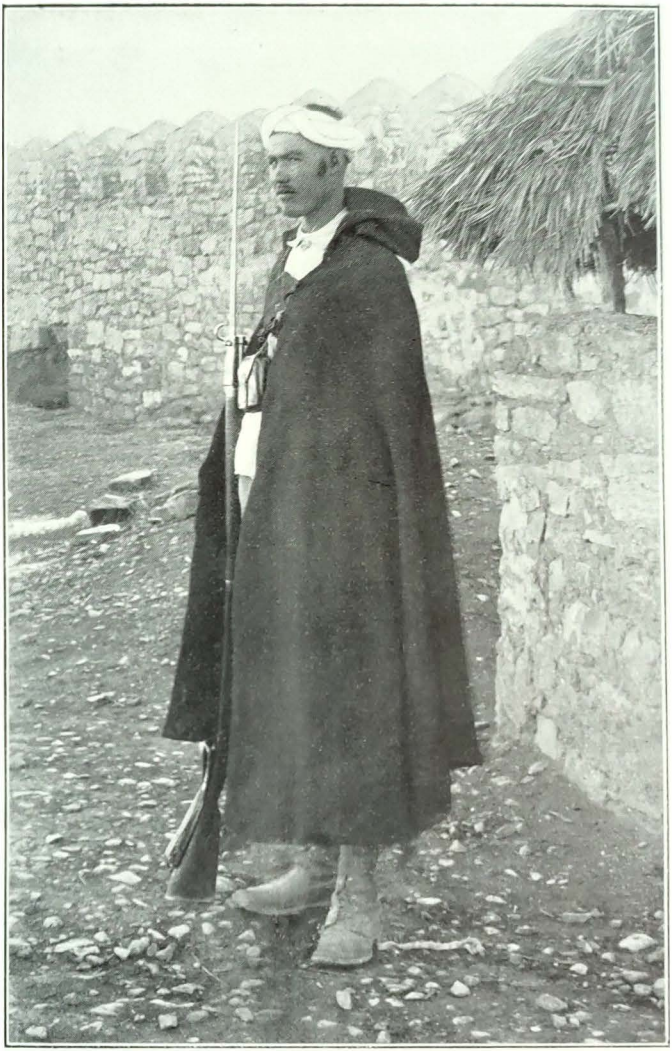
But the head man of a village, or town district, usually reports these disturbances to the Governor, at the same time giving the names of the original parties to the quarrel with others who have taken a leading part in its development. These—unless they can buy themselves off with a bribe—are sent to prison. These men are marched out of their cells in the morning and settled in groups to do work on roads, in gardens, or other places where labour is required.

During a number of years I have made visits to prison camps, and while my business there has been the preaching of the Gospel, this preaching has been mingled with quaint parables which the prisoners have added to elucidate some obscure point in my address, or has been punctuated by protests against the manner in which, as they allege, European officials allow Governors to oppress them.

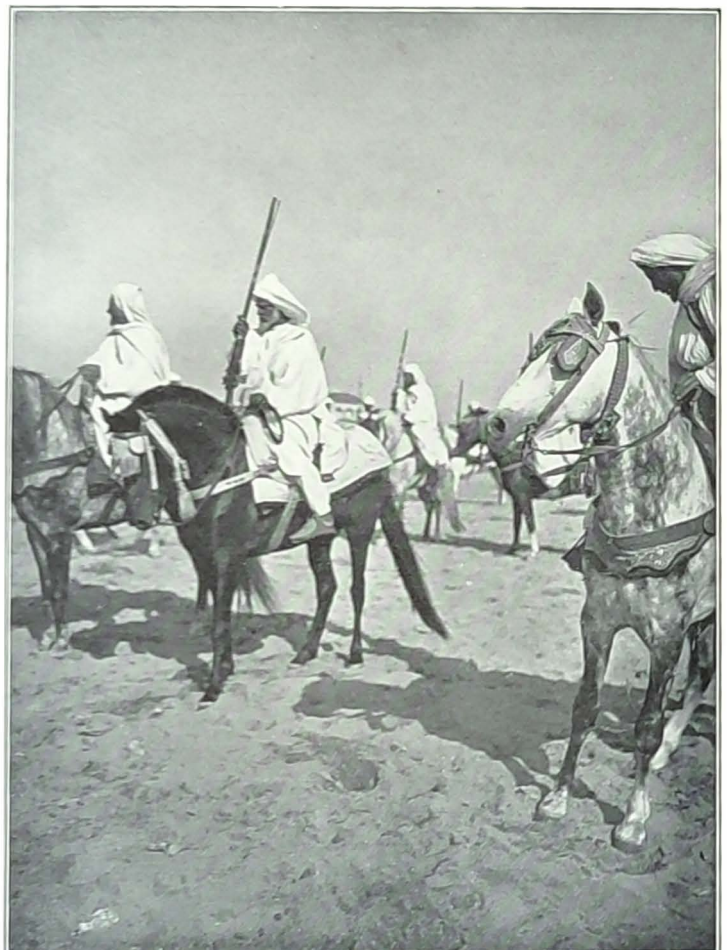
To the missionary's introductory question: "Well, what are you all doing here?" the first reply, usually developed later in conversation, is nearly always the same, and put into English amounts to: "We're here because we're here." In a first effort to wrench them out of their entrenched sullenness I add that my presence among them can be accounted for in exactly the same way! So with that much in common we have a basis from which a start can be made. Some see the funny side of their remarks, but others, embittered by the consequences of their quarrels, stiffen their resistence to my approaches.

"I am innocent," said such an one to me one day, "and if justice prevailed I would not now be here." I had to listen to his story, and when he finished, suggested that he should go to the French authorities, lodge a complaint against his native Governor's judgment, and demand an investigation. To this he replied: "Ma jal ma aarif irrijal." The words imply that he being a raw swain did not know how to approach, and address, Europeans.

Being interested in his case, I took his name and address, and made inquiries. I found he had got three months for falsifying tax-



A MOORISH NATIVE SOLDIER ON GUARD



MOORISH HORSEMAN

papers, and not for defending himself, as he told me, against an aggressor who tried to steal his donkey.

When I went back to the camp I told him what my enquiries had established. The rogue, instead of facing the facts, blurted out with some show of spirit: "What I told you and what you have learned from investigation, is the same thing. What difference is there between assault from a neighbour and oppression from a tax-gatherer? Just as I would try to defend myself from one who seeks to steal my animals, so I try to defend myself from oppressive taxation. Injustice is injustice whatever form it takes." The matter I left there, for a man so adverse to precision as this one was could not be trusted.

Another man, also much embittered by the decision reached in his trial, said he had got a month for feeding dogs and carrion-crows. "How's that?" I queried. "How's that, you ask. My cow died. I bought it with money, and Allah (may He be praised) took it away for nothing. All we have is on loan from Him. Where it died I left it. Then a pack of dogs came on the scene, tore the dead animal up and when they had finished, the carrion-crows

descended and gorged themselves. What Allah creates He feeds. So the dogs and crows had a feast from my cow, but I did not rebel against Allah because He chose mine. The remainder of the animal, bones, skin, and other odds, was left in the sun to stink and decay. A few days later I received a summons from our district Governor to appear at his tribunal. I racked my brains to find cause for this summons, but could think of nothing. Well, when I appeared for trial I was informed that a regulation was now in force to the effect that all dead animals must be buried. I had previously heard something of this regulation, but like my neighbours, did not treat it seriously. Allah who created dogs and crows cannot wish to have this new law; yet here am I doing thirty days in prison for allowing Allah's creatures to feed on the provision He makes for them!"

"Two months in prison for ploughing with Adam's title-deeds," was the complaint of another. I found on questioning him that he had ploughed a tract of land for which he had no written title-deeds to prove his ownership. "Why," he asked should it be unlawful for me to do what Adam did? Had he been

asked for title-deeds he would have put his hand on his stomach, and said: 'This requires feeding.'" This clumsy type of reasoning is characteristic of many of these prisoners' tales.

An interesting man, working in a public garden, along with a group of other prisoners, and whose preaching suggested the title for this article, after listening with me to numerous complaints and confessions from those eager to vent their feelings, summed up the situation thus: "The world is like a pomegranate. (we were standing among these trees). Just as its seeds are all squeezed together inside a shell, so we are squeezed together in towns and villages. When a pomegranate is ripe it cracks and opens, and so exposes its fruit. Then down come the birds in flocks to feast on the juicy pips. Look at the empty shells hanging on these trees: not a single pip is left within them."

At this juncture an impatient man interjected: "That's enough. This talk of yours has no bearing on what this European has been preaching."

"Patience," requested the preaching prisoner, "I'm coming to that right now. Why

are we here, all of us as empty as these pomegranate shells on the tree? We get a small loaf of coarse bread each day, but no tea, butter or meat. If we could get a cigarette that would console us, but not one of us has even got a match. Bare feet, bare heads, a sack for a garment—am I not right in saying we resemble these empty shells?" Here, in an effort to inveigle his companions into a discussion on the philosophy of life, he shouted: "Speak!"

"We have still got God," came the laconic rejoinder from one who, till now, had been silent.

"That's admitted," went on the preacher, "but still we are empty shells, squeezed together in villages we ripen for quarrels, burst and then down come the birds—I mean our Governors and Sheiks—and strip us with fines and imprisonment of all we possess."

The sermon ended, there were several comments, the chief of which was to the effect that the Devil is to blame for everything. The preacher, also a good reader, would not allow this. "What does the Koran say?" he asked. He then proceeded to picture the judgment day as set forth in that book.

"On the day of judgment the angels will give each man the book of his deeds. When these are opened and read, men and women will stare and fear as they turn over the pages and find written there all their sins done on earth. Then, seeing Satan standing among them they will say to him: 'Oh Satan, see what a catastrophe you have brought upon us.' To which he will reply: 'Do not blame me, blame yourselves. God never gave me power to force you to do evil, only the right to tempt you to do it. I invited you to my way of life, you accepted; now be off and pay the penalty.' "

This hopeless message of Islam, with no offer of pardon, no Saviour, presented me with the opportunity to proclaim once again the tidings that bring salvation by Him who conquered sin, defeated Satan, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel.

CHAPTER XXI

A Sluggish Village

THE stagnant life of midday began to stir as the cool, evening breezes caused a rustling sound among the fig trees. Women, with silver jewellery glinting from their partially covered breasts, were gathering "rags" of grass to start their fires. One man after another waddled out of his straw hut, stretched his limbs, yawned, and then lazily groaned, "Allah! Allah!"

There was little work to do. Harvest was past, the ploughing season had not arrived. Here and there, men more concerned with empty scrupulosities than solid virtue, were performing their ablutions in preparation for the evening prayer, while those who had not reached the stage of piety that exhibits itself in external ceremony, lolled about or took their usual places under the shade of trees to await the call to supper. Old men who had reached that stage of life where their only

occupation was to wait for the "Irrakus" (angel of death), reclined at the foot of a toppling dyke from which position they threw out an occasional curse against some herd who was neglecting his animals.

All this I could see and hear from the place where I sat waiting for the village to emerge from its midday slumbers.

Now that there was some sign of life I got up to join the men sitting in the shade of the trees. A feeling of despair came over me, when I got alongside of them and looked into their faces. "Their eyes stand out with fatness." That was the Bible text that flashed through my mind before I spoke. We greeted one another, but they did not seem to be sufficiently awake to take anything more than a distant interest in me. I had come to preach eternal life. But what, I asked myself, would these men do with eternal life? They seemed to be growing just like pumpkins; swelling out to burst or decay. Extinction, so I felt for the moment, was the only reasonable termination to such an existence.

But this mood, with me for the moment, was not permanent. As I forced my way through the external repulsiveness to that

mysterious centre of the soul, new values rose before me, and I felt that Christ Himself had drawn near to take part in an effort to save these men.

In the meantime my audience had grown considerably, as the men who had finished their prayers came along and squatted beside me. I made a beginning, and by dint of lively illustrations succeeded in capturing their interest. Having got through, not without wariness, the initial difficulties, I got to the heart of my message. I quoted the text: "There is one Mediator between God and man; the Man Christ Jesus." An old man with rheumy eyes glared questionably at me. As I paused between sentences I could hear his muffled growls of "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is His Prophet."

I had been preaching for some time when one of the praying men who had prolonged his prayers beyond the others, joined us. His visage was clouded. Scorn sat on his lips, the nucleus of a flaming fanacticism. He stood in silence. Evidently he thought that was the most effective way to sustain his prestige, and at the same time administer a rebuke to those who sat listening to the "infidel."

To take such a man seriously is to defeat one's own purpose. I rose up and feigning familiarity gave him my forefinger to shake instead of my whole hand, saying as I did so: "And how is the boss?" (Keef dier ilmacuddum). He shook my forefinger with embarrassing cordiality. The ugly curl on his lip was changing. A suppressed smile was beginning to play about the mouth. After a pause, during which we did nothing but stare at each other, he broke the silence. "I take it that by giving me one finger you indicate your belief in the Oneness of God?" "There is no God but God, and Jesus is the Word of God," I replied. "Is Jesus greater than Mohammed?" The curl was reasserting itself on his lip. He was eager for controversy.

Along the line of controversy there was nothing to be gained, and I set myself against it. "Are you interested in Jesus?" I asked. "Yes," he said, winking at the same time to his co-religionists. "Well, here is a Gospel. Get the reader of your village to read it and you will find an answer to your question." He refused the book. I urged its acceptance. Still he refused. I laid it on the ground and told him that as he had asked a question and

I had offered a full answer, I would now discharge my responsibility by leaving the book where I had placed it.

"Good-bye," I said, this time giving him two fingers. "You have made progress during your short stay in our village." "In what sense?" I enquired. "On arrival you held out one finger to indicate your belief in the Oneness of God; now on leaving you give me two fingers which I take to mean that you now accept the second part of our creed; 'and Mohammed is the Prophet of God.'" "Well, I must now give you my whole hand. What does that signify?" "The whole hand signifies Khamsa dil Wajibat (the five roots of the Mohammedan faith). The body has its counterpart in the Koran," he went on. "Every separate part of the human frame corresponds to some truth in the Book."

When I protested that I could only treat fanciful interpretations as so much humbug (mizath), he stiffened up and asserted that it was the very word of God.

"Well," I asked, "if that is so, what does the big toe stand for?"

A burst of laughter from the other men greeted this question. This annoyed him,

and as he had no answer to give to this question, he seized the opportunity to screen his confusion by firing a volley of curses at them. Having vented his feelings somewhat he then turned to me and said: "Please don't come back to this village. These braying donkeys are not worth your attention."

"God willing, I must return, for there are two things I want to know." His curiosity asserted itself and had the effect of cooling him down considerably. "What are these two things?" he asked quietly.

"First I want to know about this big toe business. I can see you have no answer at present; you may have when I return. Second —and this is vastly more important—I want you to search that Gospel lying there on the ground, and let me know what you think of its contents."

The atmosphere was now suitable for another advance.

"I am now going to pray to God," I said.

"Do you Europeans pray?"

"I do, anyway."

"Go ahead, then" (zeed).

"Oh God, Who has created all things, we are in Thy hands——" here someone inter-

jected: "Hadee haja misilama" (that goes without saying). "We are all sinners but in Thine infinite love Thou has opened a door of mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Here on the ground lies Thy Word, but no one stirs to accept it. Had I come with gold they would have scrambled for it——" Another interruption. One man is telling another that as sure as God has no partners so sure it is that had I spread gold before them there would have been a scramble.

I commenced again. "These men of Thy creation need Thy salvation, for like lost sheep they wander in their sins." At this juncture the "Boss" turned with a gesture towards his fellows, and said with great solemnity: "God is Great! This is true; you are like a lot of lost sheep."

"What kind of prayer is this?" asked someone impatiently, "telling God we are like lost sheep."

"Kiemital" (he's parabling), suggested another. Another, evidently interested to know where this prayer was going to end, called for silence with: "Khili yikimil" (let him finish).

But that was the end. I got no further. I was interested to notice, however, that at the

end of the prayer the book had gone. So I mounted my motor cycle, waved farewell, to which they all responded heartily, and as I made my way home, offered a prayer that the message and the Book might bring God's light and salvation to the village.

CHAPTER XXII

Letters Received

IT is a generally accepted fact that among the Arabs of Morocco there are not more than three per cent. of readers. This illiteracy makes it necessary for the missionary to make known his message, with its implications and developments, orally. Readers, then, being a rarity they expect us to approach and treat them on a different footing from those who have not attained this art.

If I find a man who is a good reader, and who has something to say, which I know can be said in two hundred words, but who will take anything from five to ten thousand if I allow him, I sometimes suggest he put his thoughts into writing, promising that if he does so, I will, after examination of his epistle, talk the matter over with him.

Only rarely is my suggestion carried out, but even where not complied with it has the effect of letting men know that I cannot stay

to thread my way through a lot of talk irrelevant to my mission. The following letter was written at my suggestion by a man who revelled in the intricacies of his own verbosity. He jumped at the idea of putting his arguments into writing, but although he never confessed it I'm sure he found the task a stiffer proposition than he had anticipated. The result was that he put into less than two hundred words the thoughts which, had they been pronounced orally, would have required half an hour's talk.

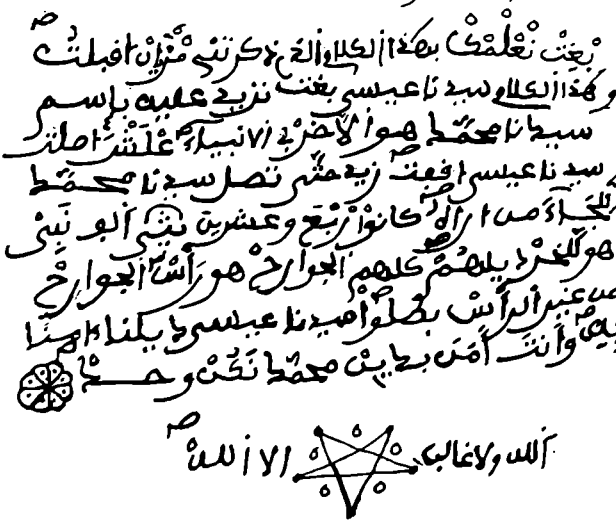
"In the name of the One God,

"Be assured and know that our Lord Mohammed has commanded us. He has said to us that Jesus the Son of Mary (upon whom be peace), must descend with the knife of Heaven and slay the Antichrist (Ilmasech Ildijal). He will speak the truth and accept the religion of works, promising and performing according to the pure system of Islam. He will remember God with heart and tongue, will perform ablutions, fast, make the five daily prayers, stand prostrate in worship, and go on pilgrimage to Mecca. He will love everybody, even those who have taken flight from their own religion of good works. This Jesus will accept

all the prophets from first to last; will marry and die in Mohammed's town and be buried there to await the resurrection. These words are true; all that contradict them are useless."

This epistle is typical of the beliefs held by the people about Jesus. They often tell us, when we mention His Name, that He belongs to them. Some of them imagine we relish this stuff, and give us big doses of it.

In the following letter (presented here in the writing of the sender), one finds an effort to persuade the missionary to become a Moslem on the ground that the Moslem accepts Jesus.



This acceptance is, of course, in the Koranic and not the Bible sense.

"Praise be to the One God Whose Kingdom is everlasting. I wish you to know that the words you spoke to me are good, and I accept them. But although I accept the words of Jesus I wish to proceed further even to the name of our lord, Mohammed. He is the last of the prophets. Why, when you arrive at Jesus, do you stop? Proceed until you arrive at our lord Mohammed who came after Him. Twenty-four thousand prophets have appeared in the world, but Mohammed is the select one. They are members of the body, he is the head. Members without a head are useless. Jesus belongs to us. We believe in Him, and now you must believe in our lord Mohammed and then we will be one." The figure at the bottom of the letter is Sulieman's ring, and the words on either side of it read: "Allah! there is no Victor except Allah."

From a young man named "the slave of the Perfect One," I have this: "Praise be to the only God. From the slave of The Perfect One to the English doctor. When we were disputing together the other day, I did not wish to hurt your mind, and that is why I did not put down

words which would have conquered you. You say Jesus died, the Koran says He did not. In the crowd they seized a man, and thinking he was Jesus, crucified Him. That is how the story of the death of Jesus originated. Why then, do you go about our streets preaching fables that contradict the Word of God? The end of it all is this: the Koran is the Great Book which has come down from Heaven. It contains everything. Please do not speak to me again about things that are not found in the book of Mohammed as it is unlawful for me to listen to them."

Some letters are impudent. "If you wish people to believe your Gospel go to the hut dwellers in the country. They will believe anything you present to them for the matter of a girsh." A girsh is a small coin like a threepenny piece.

The next letter is from a man with an axe to grind.

"In the Name of God the Merciful and Gracious. I wanted to call and see you but was ashamed. Everybody says you are a good man and your house is known to be an almonry. I read the Gospel you gave me. It contains good words. Now, we Moslems believe in

Jesus the Son of Mary. I wish to make you know that a son of Sheetan has written a lawsuit against me and restrained my ploughing, saying the ground is his. But Allah is aware of all things. May He save me from a futile lawsuit. I want you to stand by me and become my partner in farming. There will be much profit in this for me and you. God willing, I must call and see you. And thus peace."

I gave a scholar, who was well versed in Arabic literature, and who had been some years at a French college, a copy of Dr. Pfander's book, "The Balance of Truth," to read. This scholar had frequently said to me that our Scriptures were "moherfa," that is, corrupted or changed so as to delete Mohammed's name which was originally found in the Old Testament. He was also strong on the point that after the coming of Mohammed the New Testament was abrogated (nasakha). Dr. Pfander's book deals with these charges, and for that reason I was eager he should read the book and keep it beside him for reference. He accepted a copy, read it and returned it with this letter, as I had asked him to make a reply in writing. After the usual opening formula

it ran thus: "To the English missionary, from ——, greetings. I read 'The Balance of Truth,' all of it. It contains the error common to all Christian books, namely, that God has a Son. Far be it from Him that He should be associated with partners! He is unborn and has no offspring. We praise Allah for Misshaf Ishereef (Koran). A European trying to instruct Moslems in the contents of that book is like a donkey turning its head back to its rider to instruct him regarding the route. Whoever takes refuge in the Select Prophet (Kher ilwara sherafa), God will keep him from all evil."

A Berber, who had a profound contempt for the Arabs, found me one evening preaching to them. A few days later he handed me this note, written in saffron juice and embellished with quaint drawings. I give a literal translation: "Three in the world, do not trust them; the sea, the Arab, and the fox."

These letters give a glimpse into the mentality of this people. They show with what tenacity and conviction they cling to the Koran and its author. Mankind has been created from dust, and Mohammed is, to the Arabs, the "quintessence of dust," the greatest of all God's messengers. He has given them

a "roomy religion," and a place of favouritism in the economy of God.

To dissipate these errors and demolish this stronghold is the work to which a small band of Christian workers have given themselves. Some have their doubts of the wisdom of such an atmosphere, but Jesus had none: "Go, make disciples of all nations."

CHAPTER XXIII

Is It Worth While?

IN view of the opposition, indifference, and sometimes antagonism, displayed by Arabs towards the missionary and his message, there is some justification for asking the question that heads this article.

Do not both reason and paucity of results, urge a transfer of all the force, represented in time, money and other assets, now being used in missionary work in North Africa, to fields that promise larger and more rapid results? A considerable number of missionaries to this field have answered the question in the affirmative, and after a spell of service, have gone elsewhere to seek for the fruit that is lacking here, or that shows itself only at long intervals. We are not called upon to judge these people, far less condemn them; but those of us who continue in the work must give solid reasons to those who support us, as to why we carry on in face of such obstructions, and against odds that appear to be overwhelming.

Supposing the Church decided, in view of the difficulties, to withdraw all its workers from Moslem fields, what then? There would be left 250,000,000 souls without the witness of the Gospel. This would narrow down the words of Jesus: "the field is the world," to certain geographical limits, and would also compel us to face a question not easy to answer, namely, what is to happen to the Kingdom of God if we leave 250,000,000 souls out of our missionary enterprise?

Let us suppose there is a railway accident, in which a number of people are slightly, and a number of others grievously hurt. What would we think if all the doctors, nurses and ambulance men, arriving on the scene of the tragedy, after consultation came to an arrangement to lavish special care and treat first those who were but slightly hurt, leaving the groaning, helpless, dying ones for later operations? If, further, they gave as a reason for this strange action the fact that those slightly wounded were easier to deal with, and would yield speedy results, would not our sense of justice, to say no more, be outraged?

In the spiritual sphere that is just what some good Christian people have proposed

for the Moslems. In the tragedy that has overtaken the world we may say that the Moslems have suffered more than most people. Into this scene of tragedy the church has moved with her spiritual equipment, having heard the call of her Lord to minister to wounded souls. Is she now to withdraw this ministration from North Africa, or other Islamic lands, because the wound inflicted here is serious, demanding special care and patience in treatment? Surely not.

It is a part of the glory and wonder of the Gospel that it is offered as fully, freely and persistently to the bigoted, and apparently hopeless, as to others who evince interest at a first hearing. If two brothers fell into a river and were in danger of drowning, it would be difficult to imagine parents giving orders to the man with the lifebuoy to concentrate efforts upon John because he is a good boy, and not to bother about James because he is stiff-necked and gives much trouble. The tragedy would call forth from the parents a love that would forget all about the good and bad qualities of the lads, a concern that would sink distinctions and labour to save both. So does God deal with mankind. His love

ignores all differences and works to save the sinner even when he seems to be hardly worth saving, or gives such trouble that we feel justified in abandoning him.

Faith in this fact of God's love has kept numerous missionaries in North Africa for fifty years, in some cases more, in spite of the fact that the paucity of results has caused them some perplexity. To the question: "Is it worth while?" they have answered, if not always with gushing enthusiasm, then with faith and firmness, "Yes."

The characteristic of a true missionary, that is one who labours under the conviction of a call, is persistence. If one desired to find excuse, or reason, for leaving the field one would have no difficulty in doing so. Emerson tells us that the rarest thing in man is "an act of himself." When opinion, circumstance, losses, discouragements, and friends, call for a halt, the real missionary acts on his own faith and goes forward. "This is the victory that overcometh the world," yes, and all other obstructions—"even our faith." There is no other way of victory in this hard field but the way of faith.

Almost everything seems to favour our

enemies, and onlookers who are neither for nor against us are amused as they watch us charging, as it were, against a solid wall, with no other armour save that of soft hats. But the record of Christian missions has seldom been a showy, spectacular affair. It is a work that has always called for large patience.

I once travelled from London to Tilbury in a boat train. In the same carriage was a lady with a child, a boy some five years old. They were going out to join daddy in India. When we reached the docks and the great ships came within sight, the child became excited, his eyes staring with focused interest. "Is this India, mummy, and shall we see daddy, now?" asked the child of its mother. India at the end of a short train journey!

Many people who once supported the Lord's work in North Africa, whose feeling of responsibility at the home end was quite as serious as that of those on the field, have withdrawn their subscriptions, dropped their prayers and ceased to give the matter another thought. They thought the Kingdom of God should immediately come, that a few years of prayer and subscriptions should suffice to achieve this end, and because it did not materialise they

became discouraged, faith wilted and they dropped out of the marching ranks. These are the people who expect to find India at Tilbury Docks!

If we have power to visualise, and believe in, this consummation, what conditions must we fulfil for its realisation?

The condition of outstanding importance is that we must seek a basis of unity for our operations. "Woe unto him who neglects the affinities." Instead of setting in the forefront, and heavily underscoring our differences, let us seek for the affinities. These are sufficiently numerous and strong enough, to unite us under one command in a manner that will enable us to march with firm tread towards our objective. I like the text greatly which reads: "Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, *as I suppose.*" That sounds like an effort to emphasis the possible points of contact and fellowship; the expression of a desire to overlook the differences that could too easily be whipped into the foreground for purposes of contention.

Nothing is so indicative of high hopes of success as a united and orderly march towards our goal. This orderly and disciplined progression, so necessary to our enterprise, has,

alas, too frequently been weakened by the exit from the ranks of those who imagined they had special gifts, and that the effective use of these required the condition of isolated action. Thus have we seen many break away from the main body, not to pioneer, but to nourish their own whims.

Again, this unity will save us from the false emphasis which treats the missionary on the field as having a heavy responsibility, while leaving supporters at the home end to look upon their effort as something that may be taken up and laid down at will. Unity of action, unity in Christ, implies not only equality of privilege in bringing in the sheaves, but also equality of labour in working the sickle.

This unity of action gives faith a point of focus which is lacking where forces are scattered. A blurred objective has broken the faith of not a few and extinguished the faith that once saw the glory of the end in detail.

The faith that can throw its beam into, and through, the murky night of doubt and sorrow, and attach itself to the promised consummation summed up in the words: "Behold I come quickly," has the potency to challenge all obstacles and win through.

Outside our house is a manhole leading to a street drain. One day the top was taken off and an Arab labourer went down to do some repairs. Then a motor lorry came along, and to allow it to pass it was necessary to put the cover on the manhole. They shouted down to the labourer that this lorry was going to pass, and that he must come up as they were going to put the manhole cover on. "I'm not coming up," said he, "put the top on, I see a light at the other end."

Where the lorry had already passed, the top had been lifted from another manhole about fifty yards further along the road, and in at it there was streaming brilliant sunshine.

Down we go to this dark North African drain. There are those who urge us to come up to the purer air of another land. There are others who stand about in an attitude of curiosity, wondering what the result may be, and others who tell us they would not take on such a dirty job for anything. Our reply to all that is: "Put the top on, we see a light at the other end."