YARNS OF THE NEAR EAST

BY

BASIL MATHEWS, M.A.

AUTHOR OF
'YARNS OF SOUTH SEA PIONEERS' 'YARNS ON AFRICAN PIONEERS'
'THE RIDDLE OF NEARER ASIA' 'PAUL THE DAUNTLESS' ETC.

First Edition, July 1920
Second Edition, January 1922

LONDON
CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY
SALISBURY SQUARE, E.C.4
1922

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INTRODUCTION

ALL the Yarns in this book are—like those in the author's other books of Yarns—historically true and accurate in detail. They are not dramatized anecdotes, but are verified records of actual events based on authoritative documents.

It is necessary to emphasize this point, because the popularity of the "Yarns" method in which this series of books pioneered has led to the publication of stories based on history, but with a very free and inventive handling. It is easy to be accurate and dull; it is not difficult to be inaccurate and exciting; but it costs infinite labour to be at once accurate and thrilling. Yarns in this series of books, that read—as the *Boys' Brigade Gazette* has said—"like Henty at his best," are, as a matter of fact, the product of research in which documents have been carefully ransacked to secure the material on which vivid writing can confidently be based.

This book of *Yarns of the Near East* will, for its most successful use with groups of boys, require a rather more thorough preparation of mind and spirit on the part of the leader than any of the other books in this series. This fact is mainly due to two causes: first, the stories of St Paul and Mohammed focus in dramatic form the terrific battle of two great faiths, and therefore drive the mind to look at the fundamental meaning of these two faiths; and secondly, the different races (Arab, Jew, Persian, Armenian, Turkish and Greek) and the varied civilizations (Roman, Arabian, Mediæval and Modern Islamic) tend to bewilder the mind.

These demands for concentrated preparation will, however, tend to challenge and quicken rather than dispirit the better leaders of boys. To meet the difficulty we have, for the first time, prefaced the book with a very swift, short summary of the facts of the countries and peoples thus covered.

The purpose of the Yarns is not simply to provide an easy access to stirring material for gripping the attention of restless boys. The Yarns do that, but in the hands of the real leader they can do infinitely more. Boys at the intermediate age are splendid

colts, restlessly kicking over the traces. That bursting forth of often clumsy horse-play and of the aping of men is an experimental effort to get into the game of life and to discover a place for one's personality in the field of play. They begin to wish, not merely to see heroic action, but to get back to its motive. The first gleam and even the final form of vocation—the calling to one's life-work —come in adolescence.

Stimulating questions by a leader to whom they can freely talk, either in the course of, or following, a Yarn, will often start a train of thought in a boy's mind which will work "underground," so to speak, for months unseen, but may ultimately shape the destiny of the life. Occasional indications are given in the course of the Yarns of this kind of use; but indefinite expansion of the idea is possible in the hands of an inventive leader.

BASIL MATHEWS
A. E. CAUTLEY (*Editor*)

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLES

If we take a map of the Mediterranean and look at it sideways, with the east at the top, and take our stand in imagination on the top of the mountains of Malta, we are on a small stage facing a great amphitheatre.

In that amphitheatre, the known history of the Western world was started; from it every force creating modern life has issued. The first Empire in history came on the banks of the Nile to your right; the second and third on the Euphrates and the upper Tigris in front; the fourth and fifth in Greece and Rome on your left.

The foundations of our thinking, law, art, morals, religion, language, and political organization begin in that amphitheatre. Here lived the Pharaohs, Moses, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Pericles, Phidias (the greatest of sculptors), Cæsar, Cicero, St Paul, and Mohammed, and, greatest of all, Jesus of Nazareth. It was the cradle of the Jewish, the Christian, and the Moslem faiths. It has a great past; its present is degenerate; but it has potentialities for a splendid future.

One other point kept clearly in mind greatly simplifies our thinking about this area. The northern side of the whole Mediterranean is formed by four mighty bastions of rock jutting into the sea. These four buttresses are Spain, Italy, Greece, and Asia Minor, *i.e.* the Taurus. The south shore of the Mediterranean has (as a whole) an extraordinarily flat, sandy coast-line backed by deserts. The eastern end is a low coast-line behind which rise ridges of rock (Judæa, Lebanon, etc.) cleft by the deepest rift in the earth's surface (the Jordan valley). Beyond this, again, rise the hills of Moab, the volcanic plateau of Bashan, and the Syrian desert. To the south-east is the tremendous sandy waste of Arabia,

dotted with oases and with a narrow fringe of cultivation.[1] The Taurus Mountains (behind a narrow, low-lying, fever-smitten coast-line) hold up the great plateau of Asia Minor—averaging some 3000-4000 feet above sea-level. That plateau is semi-desert; it was in St Paul's day, and before the spread of Islam, one of the granaries of the world; it will become so again.

The main peoples in the area are all actors in the following Yarns. They are (working from the north-west to the south-east) (1) the Anatolian Turk on the plateau of Asia Minor—a slow, courteous, subtle, but not clever type, capable of frightful cruelty under superior orders; (2) the Armenians on the same plateau, and in the hill country to the north-east towards the Caucasus—vigorous, hardy Highlanders, astute in trade, industrious in agriculture, and rather rugged and discourteous in manner; (3) the Syrians from Aleppo and Alexandretta southward through Syria and Judæa—an attractive race whose qualities have been partially submerged by centuries of Turkish misrule; (4) the Jews, sprinkled here and there in colonies; and (5) the Arabs from the Syrian Desert to the Persian Gulf and across to the Red Sea. It must also be kept in mind that the Ægean Coast of Asia Minor (Smyrna, etc.) has always been Greek, and that (6) the Greeks have throughout history lived and traded on the plateau (*e.g.* Timothy at Lystra).

The religion of the great majority of the people in the Near East is Mohammedanism. Fiercely intolerant as "the religion of the scimitar" makes the Moslem, yet—as these Yarns show—men and women who go to them as Christians to be friends and helpers are able to break down that intolerance and make lasting friendships of a strong kind.

For centuries all this area and these peoples have degenerated under the desolating misgovernment of the Turk. To-day that is being changed, and many of the peoples are on the eve of an unknown future of unfathomed possibilities, beyond anything ever realized in their history.

[1] For a fuller description of the different areas and peoples, and for the background of the Yarns as a whole, see the author's *The Riddle of Nearer Asia*. (U.C.M.E. 2s. net.)

I

THE HERO OF THE LONG TRAIL

St Paul

(Dates, b. A.D. 6, d. A.D. 67[1])

LEADER'S AIM.

To awaken, by showing Paul's heroic effort to achieve his vision of carrying the Christian Faith to the Roman Empire, a sense of debt to a hero of the Near East.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

The successful telling of this Yarn will partly depend on the very vivid and unexpected presentation of material that will be familiar to many boys. For this reason it is well to keep back the names of the three comrades till at least the point where they are introduced in the Yarn.

A point of contact might be found by asking if any boy has a brother or uncle or anybody he knows who fought in Mesopotamia or Palestine. If so, did they say anything about how hot and difficult the marching was? The British prisoners from Kut actually came over much of the ground covered in this Yarn.

It will be of great benefit if the leader can make—or, better still, get a boy to make—say, on a piece of brown paper, an outline map in crayon of the country covered by St Paul, with the cities indicated by dots. The cities covered in this Yarn could then be written in as they come in the story.

AUTHORITIES.

The Acts of the Apostles. **The Letters of St Paul. Personal travel by the Author over much of the ground.**

The Three Comrades.

The purple shadows of three men moved ahead of them on the tawny stones of the Roman road on the high

[1] The dates are, of course, conjectural; but those given are accepted by high authorities. Paul was about forty-four at the time of this Yarn.

plateau of Asia Minor one bright, fresh morning.[1] They had just come out under the arched gateway through the thick walls of the Roman city of Antioch-in-Pisidia. The great aqueduct of stone that brought the water to the city from the mountains on their right[2] looked like a string of giant camels turned to stone.

Of the three men, one was little more than a boy. He had the oval face of his Greek father and the glossy dark hair of his Jewish mother. The older men, whose long tunics were caught up under their girdles to give their legs free play in walking, were brown, grizzled, sturdy travellers. They had walked a hundred leagues together from the hot plains of Syria, through the snow-swept passes of the Taurus mountains, and over the sun-scorched levels of the high plateau.[3] Their muscles were as tireless as whipcord. Their courage had not quailed before robber or blizzard, the night yells of the hyena or the stones of angry mobs.

For the youth this was his first adventure out into the glorious, unknown world. He was on the open road with the glow of the sun on his cheek and the sting of the breeze in his face; a strong staff in his hand; with his wallet stuffed with food—cheese, olives, and some flat slabs of bread; and by his side his own great hero, Paul. Their sandals rang on the stone pavement of the road which ran straight as a strung bow-line from the city, Antioch-in-Pisidia, away to the west. The boy carried over his shoulder the cloak of Paul, and carried that cloak as though it had been the royal

[1] The plateau on which Lystra, Derbe, Iconium, and Antioch-in-Pisidia stood is from 3000 to 4000 feet above sea-level.

[2] The aqueduct was standing there in 1914, when the author was at Antioch-in-Pisidia (now called Yalowatch).

[3] A Bible with maps attached will give the route from Antioch in Syria, round the Gulf of Alexandretta, past Tarsus, up the Cilician Gates to Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch-in-Pisidia.

purple garment of the Roman Emperor himself instead of the worn, faded, travel-stained cloak of a wandering tent-maker.

The two older men, whose names were Paul the Tarsian and Silas, had trudged six hundred miles. Their younger companion, whose name was "Fear God," or Timothy as we say, with his Greek fondness for perfect athletic fitness of the body, proudly felt the taut, wiry muscles working under his skin.

On they walked for day after day, from dawn when the sun rose behind them to the hour when the sun glowed over the hills in their faces. They turned north-west and at last dropped down from the highlands of this plateau of Asia Minor, through a long broad valley, until they looked down across the Plain of Troy to the bluest sea in the world.

Timothy's eyes opened with astonishment as he looked down on such a city as he had never seen—the great Roman seaport of Troy. The marble Stadium, where the chariots raced and the gladiators fought, gleamed in the afternoon light.

The three companions could not stop long to gaze. They swung easily down the hill-sides and across the plain into Troy, where they took lodgings.

They had not been in Troy long when they met a doctor named Luke. We do not know whether one of them was ill and the doctor helped him; we do not know whether Doctor Luke (who was a Greek) worshipped, when he met them, Æsculapius, the god of healing of the Greek people. The doctor did not live in Troy, but was himself a visitor.

"I live across the sea," Luke told his three friends—Paul, Silas and Timothy—stretching his hand out towards the north. "I live," he would say proudly, "in the

greatest city of all Macedonia—Philippi. It is called after the great ruler Philip of Macedonia."

Then Paul in his turn would be sure to tell Doctor Luke what it was that had brought him across a thousand miles of plain and mountain pass, hill and valley, to Troy. This is how he would tell the story in such words as he used again and again:

"I used to think," he said, "that I ought to do many things to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. I had many of His disciples put into prison and even voted for their being put to death. I became so exceedingly mad against them that I even pursued them to foreign cities.

"Then as I was journeying[1] to Damascus, with the authority of the chief priests themselves, at mid-day I saw on the way a light from the sky, brighter than the blaze of the sun, shining round about me and my companions. And, as we were all fallen on to the road, I heard a voice saying to me:

"'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goad.'

"And I said, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"The answer came: 'I am Jesus, whom you persecute.'"

Then Paul went on:

"I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; but I told those in Damascus and in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, aye! and the foreign nations also, that they should repent and turn to God."

"Later on," said Paul, "I fell into a trance, and Jesus came again to me and said, 'Go, I will send you afar to the Nations.' That (Paul would say to Luke) is why I walk among perils in the city; in perils in the wilder-

[1] Compare Acts ix. 1-8, xxvi. 12-20.

ness; in perils in the sea; in labour and work; in hunger and thirst and cold, to tell people everywhere of the love of God shown in Jesus Christ." [1]

How many perils can the boys recall that came to Paul on his travels? They can count them up—the escape from Damascus, the stoning at Lystra and Antioch, the riot at Ephesus, the scourging and imprisonment at Philippi, the shipwreck, and so on.

The Call to Cross the Sea.

One night, after one of these talks, as Paul was asleep in Troy, he seemed to see a figure standing by him. Surely it was the dream-figure of Luke, the doctor from Macedonia, holding out his hands and pleading with Paul, saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

Now neither Paul nor Silas nor Timothy had ever been across the sea into the land that we now call Europe. But in the morning, when Paul told his companions about the dream that he had had, they all agreed that God had called them to go and deliver the good news of the Kingdom to the people in Luke's city of Philippi and in the other cities of Macedonia.

So they went down into the busy harbour of Troy, where the singing sailor-men were bumping bales of goods from the backs of camels into the holds of the ships, and they took a passage in a little coasting ship. She hove anchor and was rowed out through the entrance between the ends of the granite piers of the harbour. The seamen hoisting the sails, the little ship went gaily out into the Ægean Sea.

All day they ran before the breeze and at night anchored under the lee of an island. At dawn they sailed northward again with a good wind, till they saw land. Behind the coast on high ground the columns of a temple glowed

[1] St Paul's motive and message are developed more fully in the author's *Paul the Dauntless*, especially in pages 101-104 and 224-230. (Partridge. 10s. 6d. net.)

in the sunlight. They ran into a spacious bay and anchored in the harbour of a new city—Neapolis as it was called—the port of Philippi.

Landing from the little ship, Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke climbed from the harbour by a glen to the crest of the hill, and then on, for three or four hours of hard walking, till their sandals rang on the pavement under the marble arch of the gate through the wall of Philippi.

Flogging and Prison.

As Paul and his friends walked about in the city they talked with people; for instance, with a woman called Lydia, who also had come across the sea from Asia Minor where she was born. She and her children and slaves all became Christians. So the men and women of Philippi soon began to talk about these strange teachers from the East. One day Paul and Silas met a slave girl dressed in a flowing, coloured tunic. She was a fortune-teller, who earned money for her masters by looking at people and trying to see at a glance what they were like so that she might tell their fortunes. The fortune-telling girl saw Paul and Silas going along, and she stopped and called out loud so that everyone who went by might hear: "These men are the slaves of the Most High God. They tell you the way of Salvation."

The people stood and gaped with astonishment, and still the girl called out the same thing, until a crowd began to come round. Then Paul turned round and with sternness in his voice spoke to the evil spirit in the girl and said: "In the Name of Jesus Christ, I order you out of her."

From that day the girl lost her power to tell people's fortunes, so that the money that used to come to her

masters stopped flowing. They were very angry and stirred up everybody to attack Paul and Silas. A mob collected and searched through the streets until they found them. Then they clutched hold of their arms and robes, shouting: "To the prætors! To the prætors!" The prætors were great officials who sat in marble chairs in the Forum, the central square of the city.

The masters of the slave girl dragged Paul and Silas along. At their heels came the shouting mob and when they came in front of the prætors, the men cried out:

"See these fellows! Jews as they are, they are upsetting everything in the city. They tell people to take up customs that are against the Law for us as Romans to accept."

"Yes! Yes!" yelled the crowd. "Flog them! Flog them!"

The prætors, without asking Paul or Silas a single question as to whether this was true, or allowing them to make any defence, were fussily eager to show their Roman patriotism. Standing up they gave their orders:

"Strip them, flog them."

The slaves of the prætors seized Paul and Silas and took their robes from their backs. They were tied by their hands to the whipping-post. The crowd gathered round to see the foreigners thrashed.

The lictors—that is the soldier-servants of the prætors—untied their bundles of rods. Then each lictor brought down his rod with cruel strokes on Paul and Silas. The rods cut into the flesh and the blood flowed down.

Then their robes were thrown over their shoulders, and the two men, with their tortured backs bleeding, were led into the black darkness of the cell of the city

prison ; shackles were snapped on to their arms, and their feet were clapped into stocks. Their bodies ached ; the other prisoners groaned and cursed ; the filthy place stank ; sleep was impossible.

But Paul and Silas did not groan. They sang the songs of their own people, such as the verses that Paul had learned—as all Jewish children did—when he was a boy at school. For instance—

God is our refuge and strength,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore will we not fear, though the earth do change,
And though the mountains be moved in the heart of the seas ;
Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

As they sang there came a noise as though the mountains really were shaking. The ground rocked ; the walls shook ; the chains were loosened from the stones ; the stocks were wrenched apart ; their hands and feet were free ; the heavy doors crashed open. It was an earthquake.

The jailer leapt to the entrance of the prison. The moonlight shone on his sword as he was about to kill himself, thinking his prisoners had escaped.

" Do not harm yourself," shouted Paul. " We are all here."

" Torches ! Torches ! " yelled the jailer.

The jailer, like all the people of his land, believed that earthquakes were sent by God. He thought he was lost. He turned to Paul and Silas who, he knew, were teachers about God.

" Sirs," he said, falling in fear on the ground, " what must I do to be saved ? "

" Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," they replied, " and you and your household will all be saved."

The jailer's wife then brought some oil and water, and

the jailer washed the poor wounded backs of Paul and Silas and rubbed healing oil into them.

The night was now passing and the sun began to rise. There was a tramp of feet. The lictors who had thrashed Paul and Silas marched to the door of the prison with an order to free them. The jailer was delighted.

"The prætors have sent to set you free," he said. "Come out then and go in peace."

He had the greatest surprise in his life when, instead of going, Paul turned and said:

"No, indeed! The prætors flogged us in public in the Forum and without a trial—flogged Roman citizens! They threw us publicly into prison, and now they are going to get rid of us secretly. Let the prætors come here themselves and take us out!"

Surely it was the boldest message ever sent to the powerful prætors. But Paul knew what he was doing, and when the Roman prætors heard the message they knew that he was right. They would be ruined if it were reported at Rome that they had publicly flogged Roman citizens without trial.

Their prisoner, Paul, was now their judge. They climbed down from their marble seats and walked on foot to the prison to plead with Paul and Silas to leave the prison and not to tell against them what had happened.

"Will you go away from the city?" they asked. "We are afraid of other riots."

So Paul and Silas consented. They went to the home of Lydia, where they had been staying in Philippi.

Paul cheered up the other Christian folk—Lydia and Luke and Timothy—and told them how the jailer and his wife and family had all become Christians.

"Keep the work of spreading the message here in Philippi going strongly," said Paul to Luke and Timothy.

"Be cheerfully prepared for trouble." And then he and Silas, instead of going back to their own land, went out together in the morning light of the early winter of A.D. 50, away along the Western road over the hills to face perils in other cities in order to carry the Good News to the people of the West.

The Trail of the Hero-Scout.

So Paul the dauntless pioneer set his brave face westwards, following the long trail across the Roman Empire—the hero-scout of Christ. Nothing could stop him—not scourgings nor stonings, prison nor robbers, blizzards nor sand-storms. He went on and on till at last, as a prisoner in Rome, he laid his head on the block of the executioner and was slain. These are the brave words that we hear from him as he came near to the end: I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT; I HAVE RUN MY COURSE; I HAVE KEPT THE FAITH.

Long years afterward, men who were Christians in Rome carried the story of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ across Europe to some savages in the North Sea Islands —called Britons. Paul handed the torch from the Near East to the people in Rome. They passed the torch on to the people of Britain—but it came first through Paul from the lands of Syria and Judæa, where our Lord Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again.

II

THE PROPHET OF THE SCIMITAR

Mohammed

(Dates, b. A.D. 570, d. A.D. 632)

LEADER'S AIM.

To help boys, through the story of Mohammed's life, to grasp the real meaning of Islam as opposed to Christianity.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

This Yarn contains rather more material than would usually be told as one story, and the details are not all of equal interest to the younger boys. They are, however, narrated for three reasons:—(1) because Mohammed and his religion dominate the area covered by the Yarns, and Islam is the religion of ninety millions of subjects of the British Empire, and it is therefore vital for us to grasp the essential character of Mohammed and his faith; (2) because it is important for the continuous record to be in the mind of the leader; and (3) because, for boys who *are* able to grasp the whole record, the less simple elements in the story are precisely those that are most useful. This is specially true of the material bearing on the question—What would have happened if Mohammed had become a Christian? This point of profound importance would bore many juniors, interest most intermediates, and fascinate the liveliest minds of both ages.

This means that the Leader must exercise judgment in selecting material to suit his group of boys. For all ages it will help considerably if the Leader can draw quite a simple outline of the journeys from Mecca to Yathreb (Medina), and to Bosra, with indications of the Red Sea, the Dead Sea, and the Jordan Valley, in order to relate the Arabian travel to the better-known places. This will be of assistance also as a preparation for the geography of the later Yarns.

A point of contact similar to that for Yarn I. is suggested. Have any of the boys heard of Colonel Lawrence and Emir Feisul, and the great adventure they had against the Turks in the war? Emir Feisul is the most famous living member of the Arab race. The Arabs live in Arabia and Mesopotamia and travel all through North and Central Africa, North India, and even China on their camels. We are going to hear a Yarn about the most famous Arab who ever lived.

AUTHORITIES.

Muir, *The Life of Mahomet.*
Auxiliary reading book, T. R. W. Lunt, *The Story of Islam.* (U.C.M.E. 1s. 6d. net.)

The Desert Boy.

There once lived a boy out in the blazing desert of Arabia, in the black, low tents of a wild Bedouin tribe. He was born in the city of Mecca; but his mother knew that he would be stronger if he grew up in the keen desert air. So she sent him to live with a tribe that she knew. It was thirteen hundred and fifty years ago, and the name of the boy was Mohammed, the son of Abdallah.

So in the open air under the desert sun, among the fierce Arabs, he grew to be a strong boy. The camels gave him their milk to drink. From their hair his little cloak and girdle were woven and under a tent of camel-hair he slept. As he learned to walk he stumbled on the sand of the desert. He played with the lambs of the flock, laughed at the baby-camels, talked with the shepherds and camel-men under the shade of the tent or in the blazing sunshine of the open country. He had no books to read. The tracks of the camel in the sand were his alphabet; the warriors' tales by the desert fire of fightings with other tribes were his school-books.

One day, when the boy was still only seven years old, Mohammed's mother fell ill and died. His father had died before he was born. And so he was taken to live with the brown, wrinkled, white-bearded old grandfather, the great chief, Abd al Muttalib, at Mecca. But two years later the old man died, and the orphan boy Mohammed cried very much, for he now had neither father nor mother nor grandfather.

Mohammed, however, had a splendid uncle, Abu Talib; and his grandfather left the boy to Uncle Abu

Talib's care. So fond was this uncle of his nephew that he made him always sleep by his bed, eat by his side, and go with him whenever he went out to walk.

A Wonderful Journey.

One day, when Mohammed was twelve years old, Uncle Abu Talib got his caravan of camels together to go on a long journey of many months to sell and buy merchandise a thousand miles away to the north in Syria.

See usual route on map on cover. Get one of the boys to take the brown paper outline map home to fill in the journey.

The camels were all ready. Abu Talib's own riding camel was on its knees in the courtyard waiting for his master to mount.

The uncle stooped to say " Good-bye " to his nephew. But the boy clung to his uncle, who was to him father and mother and grandfather in one. Abu Talib looked into the face of the boy, with the dark piercing eyes, the wide brow, the strong nose, the quivering lips. He could not say him " Nay."

" Come with me," said Uncle Abu Talib to Mohammed.

So to his joy the twelve-year-old Mohammed found himself sitting on the back of the camel by his uncle, riding down the streets of Mecca, past the mud-built houses, on to the open track that led out and out into the great world.

The camels swung along the hot, blistering tracks of sand and rock, up the valley, winding through the hills, hour after hour, with muscles like tireless steel cable, grumbling and growling, yet striding along the sandy tracks and under a sky of brazen heat such as would have slain any other beast on earth.

At last they came to a paved Roman road that ran northward as straight as a javelin into a splendid city

called Bosra.[1] As the camels lurched under the shadows of the gateway through the city walls, the twelve-year-old boy's eyes opened wide with wonder at the broad streets and the chariots, the Roman soldiers and the busy market. Never had he seen anything so wonderful.

Then he heard bells ringing. He saw men in long robes go into strange, big buildings—the churches—from which came the sound of chanting and the smell of incense. He saw a curious sign on the churches and sometimes hanging from the neck of a man or woman in the street, in the shape of a short piece of wood across a longer piece—a Cross they called it; and, stranger still, on the Cross sometimes there was the figure of a Man nailed to it as a criminal. Why should they carry on their necks the model of a Roman gallows with a criminal nailed to it? And why should they worship that Man as God?

The boy Mohammed did not know. He had never heard the true story of Jesus, and no Christian among the thousands and thousands in Bosra told it to him, though he did catch snatches of distorted tales that were wildly untrue.

The boys might be asked what they think would have happened if somebody like St Paul had been in Bosra when the boy Mohammed was there. Would he have been worshipping before little picture-images inside the churches, or would he have been telling the Jews and the Arabs about the Father-God, who so loved them all that He sent His Son to show His love?

When Abu Talib had finished buying and selling with the merchants at Bosra, he and young Mohammed climbed again on to the back of the camel, and the boy would have a thousand sights and sounds to think over

[1] Bosra is 60 miles east of Jordan, on the road to Damascus. It was then on the eastern fringe of the Roman Empire; a great market-place between the Mediterranean world and the tribes of the desert.

as he journeyed back, and to tell his friends about when at last they reached Mecca again.

The Man of Mecca.

Mohammed soon grew to be a man with jet black hair over his broad brow, and dark arched eyebrows that met. His black, piercing eyes were veiled by long dark eyelashes. His nose was fine but high. His black beard was long and bushy. His shoulders were broad, his back stooped a little. His step was quick and decided.

One day, when he was twenty-five years old, his uncle Abu Talib came to him. "Mohammed," he said, "there is a caravan of camels of thine own tribe about to start for Syria. Khadijah, who owns them, needeth men of our tribe to send forth with her merchandise. She would readily accept thy services."

"Be it as thou hast said," replied Mohammed.

Khadijah agreed, and Mohammed in a few days was on camel-back again on the great north track that led to Damascus—the road up which he had gone thirteen years earlier as a boy with his uncle. At last the long string of camels again reached the great city of Bosra, where he bargained with the crafty Syrian merchants as he sold them the camel-hair cloth, the spices and the fruits of Arabia.

Mohammed had already, in the fair held every year at a town not far from Mecca, heard the great Bishop Coss preach, on the back of a famous red camel that he rode, and he is sure to have talked with the monks and the priests of Bosra, but the monks and priests had gone far from the truth that Jesus had taught, and that St Paul had preached. Actually the idea that Mohammed got from talking with them was, that the Christians preached that there were three separate Gods, the Lord, Mary the Mother, and Jesus. How much more Mohammed would have learned if St Paul could have talked with him, as he did with young Timothy! How much more he would have learned if only the Christian people had known the true story of the life and death of Jesus Christ!

Mohammed came back toward Mecca on his camel, happy in the thought that he had done well in his selling and buying. While he was yet a good way from Mecca he speeded up his camel and came swinging at a rapid pace down the valley ahead of the camel caravan.

On the roof of her house sat Khadijah, with her maidens seated around her, watching and waiting for the return of her camels. Mohammed's camel knelt at the gateway; he leapt to the ground and quickly went up the steps to the roof. There he told Khadijah how he had fared and spread before her the good things he had bought.

She was greatly pleased with what he had done; but as she looked at his strong face, his flashing eyes, his black hair and beard and his broad shoulders, and saw that he seemed both strong and gentle, Khadijah was even better pleased with him than with the things that he had bought. So they were married.

For a long time after this Mohammed lived very quietly in Mecca, thinking a great deal and not talking very much. His wife Khadijah helped him in many things, for she was very wise. He was clever, as this story will show. One day a sudden storm of rain in the hills sent a flood of water down the valley which smote the sacred Kaaba, the square building that was the holy temple of Mecca. The flood brought part of it crashing to the ground. After some time the people of Mecca began to rebuild it, but a great difficulty arose when the time came to put the sacred Black Stone, which all Meccans worshipped as holy, back in its place in the wall. Four tribes of the great Koreish clan had each charge of one of the four walls of the Kaaba. Each of the four tribes had a chief. Each chief thought that *he* should put the stone in the wall. None would give

in. At last they said: "We will abide by the judgment of the next man who comes in at the gate."

At that moment Mohammed entered.

They told him of their difficulty. Without a moment's hesitation he threw his cloak from his shoulders, laid it on the ground, picked up the Black Stone and placed it in the middle of the cloak.

"Now each of the four chiefs take one corner of the mantle," said Mohammed.

So they lifted the stone on to the cloak of Mohammed and all four chiefs carried it to the Kaaba. Mohammed guided it with his hand to its place in the wall.

The Prophet of Allah.

Mohammed saw the people worshipping the great idol Hobal in the Kaaba and a host of other images. He had heard the Jews speak of the one God invisible who ruled all things. He adopted a boy, Zeid, as a son. Zeid came from a Christian tribe of Arabs, and (although he knew very little, and a good deal of what he knew was wrong) he could yet tell Mohammed something of the Christian's worship of an unseen God.

Mohammed used to spend whole days thinking about these things. Sometimes he walked out to the slopes of Mount Hira, a little more than two miles north of Mecca. There he would go into a cave all alone, or with his faithful Khadijah, and would think all day about the world of men in the city and on the plains, and about the world of stars and moon and sun. These are some of the questions that worked his mind into a frenzy:

"Why have all the other nations got a king and yet the Arabs are a mass of warring little tribes? The Arabs worship strange stones and little images; but the Christians and the Jews worship an invisible God,

Who is right? Perhaps that is why they have such greatness. Is there after all only one God?"

At last, through torture of mind and the mist of strange visions, he became sure that there are not hundreds of gods, but that God is One and is Spirit.

"La ilaha illa Alla!" he cried. "There is no God but Allah!"

He talked to his wife about this and she believed; so did their adopted son Zeid, and gradually one man after another joined him.

Then at midnight, as he lay sleeping with his cloak over him in the cave on the mountain side, he saw (as it seemed to him) in a vision the Angel Gabriel appearing in brightness and saying to him: "O thou that art covered: Arise and preach."

"What does it mean?" he asked himself. The answer seemed plain. God had told him to tell his message out to the people. So he added to his simple creed the words "and I am the messenger of Allah."

"There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the Apostle of Allah"—this was the message he preached. "You must surrender to Allah," he said. And the word "Islam" (meaning "the surrender" of the soul to Allah) became the name of the new religion.

Mohammed went down from the mountain side and told the people there of the one God beside whom there was no other. The tribe of the Koreish, who were the guardians of the Kaaba, were furiously angry. If Mohammed was right, then the Black Stone and the many gods, and their female angels, Lat and Uzza, were frauds; the worship of the Kaaba was a lie.

So they began to persecute Mohammed and his followers. One man flung the inside of a dead goat on to Mohammed's hearth just as he was cooking his dinner.

Others cursed him. But Khadijah his wife stood by him and helped him to be strong and to face his enemies.

Not long after this Khadijah died.

The Prophet of Arabia.

Every year a great religious festival was held at Mecca. Hundreds and hundreds of Arab pilgrims came from all parts of Arabia. Mohammed went among the worshippers as they strolled about the town after visiting the sacred Kaaba—laughing, chattering, buying, selling, eating and drinking, examining camels and sheep in the crowded fair. Among them Mohammed saw twelve men from the city of Yathreb away to the north. He talked to them of the one true Allah. They not only believed in what he said, but when they went back from the pilgrimage, along the desert trail to their city, they told their friends. So many of these believed that actually there came on the pilgrimage in the next year over seventy men who travelled two hundred and fifty miles from Yathreb specially to invite Mohammed to come to their city to live. He felt that he would like to go with them away from the hatred of Mecca.

So it was arranged that Mohammed and his followers should take the northward trail to Yathreb. Two hundred of them went, and at last Mohammed and his faithful friend Abu Bakr were the only ones of his band left in Mecca. The anger of the Meccans rose.

Then the Meccan chiefs plotted secretly to assassinate Mohammed. Mohammed heard of it and went hurriedly at night to Abu Bakr's house; in the evening shadows they crept through a back window and fled into the desert southward. In the darkness they clambered over rugged rocks up the hills toward the towering mountain called Thaur, all wild and bare.

Their feet were bruised on the boulders and their clothes were torn by the tough thorny bushes. In two hours they were at the mountain top and hid in a cave.

On the third night two camels climbed the mountain led by a man. Mohammed mounted the swift racing camel Al Caswa. Abu Bakr and his servant were on the other. They swept swiftly along the trail to the west by the seashore to throw any pursuers off the track, and then fled north up the road to Syria by the Red Sea coast and struck inland to Yathreb—which has ever since been called el Medina—the city of the prophet.[1]

The Battle of Badr.

From this hour Mohammed went on from success to success and at the same time went down from crime to crime. Like a robber-chief, he sent his followers out on swift camels across the hot desert sands to hide behind rocks and to hold up the caravans of camels, kill the men in charge, and come back with the booty. He took to himself wife after wife—till he soon had a dozen of them. He slew a man and married the dead man's wife himself in a few days. He heard that an aged man—a hundred years old—a Jew—had made rhyming jokes against him. "Who will rid me of this fellow?" he cried angrily. A follower crept off and slew the defenceless old man while he was lying asleep, and was not punished.

At last Mohammed decided to attack the greatest of all the caravans of Mecca, in which were many camels bearing on their backs wealth to the city from Syria. Mohammed gathered together his men. The Meccans sent out an army to defend the caravan. The two

[1] This emigration (Hegira) is the date from which Islam's chronology begins (A.H.=the year of the Hegira). It was June 20, 622.

forces met at a place of wells, called Badr. Mohammed himself did not fight, but he urged on his men, shouting his fierce and bloody prayer :

" Victory, O Allah — Victory ! Paradise for the Believer who dies—Glory for the Believer who lives—death and hell-fire for the idolaters ! "

The battle swayed to and fro ; rain came in a gale of wind and slashed the faces of the men of Mecca. The men of Mohammed inflamed with fury at last drove the Meccans back in flight. There were only sixty-three casualties ; but it was a turning-point in the history of the world, for it began that triumphant and horrible story of slaughter by which Mohammed's scimitar triumphed over the Mediterranean world. A great pit was dug and Mohammed stood at its edge gloating loudly over his fallen enemies while the dead were thrown in. On the way back Mohammed ordered a prisoner, Ocba, out to execution.

" Why do you slay me ? " asked Ocba.

" Because you are an enemy to God and his Prophet," replied Mohammed.

" And my little girl," cried Ocba, " who will take care of her ? "

" Hell-fire," shouted Mohammed.

The man was hacked to death with a scimitar. As he lay there Mohammed cried, " I give thanks unto Allah that hath slain thee and comforted mine eyes thereby." He renewed his journey back to Medina.

The people in Mecca decided to smite Mohammed and Medina into the sand. They sent 10,000 people to wipe him out, but his earthworks held them at bay till they melted away from sheer hunger. Then he launched 10,000 men at Mecca and conquered it. Mohammed mounted his camel and rode to the Kaaba—

the Holy of Holies of Mecca—where he hurled Uzza and Lat and the other godlets crashing to the ground, and then, to the astonishment of the people, did not destroy the Kaaba, but made it the very centre of his own religion.

The burly negro Bilal went up on to the roof, and across Mecca he shouted the cry that now rings out from tens of thousands of minarets in four continents of the world :

" Allah is most great ! I witness that there is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the apostle of Allah ! Come to prayer ! Come to salvation ! God is most great ! There is no God but Allah ! "

The news swept like the sirocco across the desert. All Arabia was flaming with the fame of the Prophet. From north, south, east and west, chiefs brought in their allegiance. In twelve months Mohammed had under his control an army three times mightier than any that had ever been imagined in Arabia. His scimitar flashed in the defiles of Syria. The campaigns of the Crescent had begun. A new and tremendous force had broken upon the world.

In that hour a fever struck the prophet. He struggled against it for a few days. Then in the arms of his favourite wife Ayesha he died.

The Meaning of the Man.

As he lay there at the end of his life, his dying head on the breast of Ayesha, he was the strangest tangle of contradictions. A hero at the beginning, he had faced the anger of his people and outlawry by his city to preach the one Allah in whom he believed ; yet he became a bully who stirred a youth to slay a sleeping old man, whose grey hairs should have protected him.

He believed at the beginning that the words that are now gathered in the Koran came to him direct from Allah; but later, when he wanted to do some evil deed, he pretended Allah had ordered him to do it. So he made filth, plunder, and loot religious acts.

As an Arab robber-chief we could excuse and even be thrilled by his story. But he called himself God's prophet, and so he tried to make the standards of a bloodthirsty robber-chieftain the standard of all men everywhere for ever.

At the end of the Yarn a map like that on the cover at the end of this book might be shown, and the boys could be told that in the world (including, of course, India and N. Africa) to-day over 200,000,000 people bow to Allah in Mohammed's name every day. Of those, 15,000,000 are in the lands of Nearer Asia covered by these Yarns. The rule of Mohammedan government in all those lands has been rotten and evil. What is going to happen to those people in the new days after the war?

In some groups of boys—say round a Scout camp-fire where they are on intimate terms with their leader and each other—they will discuss freely what they think of a man like Mohammed and a man like St Paul. Complete sincerity of statement should be encouraged. Even if they prefer the bandit to the heroic missionary, they should freely say so. In other groups meeting indoors they will enjoy *e.g.*:

(1) setting down in two parallel columns the good and the bad sides of Mohammed's character;

(2) comparing, in similar parallels, the characters of St Paul and Mohammed. It is obvious, for instance, that in daring and in intellect St Paul was infinitely the greater man. Mohammed's strength was his intense, narrow, intolerant violence;

(3) discussing what might have happened if Mohammed had become a Christian missionary.

III

SONS OF THE DESERT

Abdallah and Sabat
(Time of Incidents, about 1800-1810)

Leader's Aim.

To show, through the adventures of two young Arabs, the difference made in men by believing in Mohammed or believing in Jesus Christ.

Introductory Notes.

Both this Yarn and the following one—on Henry Martyn—cover more ground in different countries than has been attempted in any previous Yarns. In order to avoid confusion of mind and to help the boys to realize the tremendous distances covered, the use of a map is necessary.

If any boy in the troop can draw an outline map with crayon on brown paper the leader should ask him to do so. The map should extend from the Red Sea and the Black Sea on the west to Calcutta (or if possible Sumatra) on the east. No names should be put in. It will greatly increase the zest of the group-discussion if the boys put in the places as they are named while the story is being told—Mecca, Kabul, Bokhara, Madras, Vizagapatam, Calcutta, Cawnpore, and Penang in this Yarn; and—in addition—Colombo, Bombay, Muskat, Bushire, Shiraz, Tabriz, Armenia, and Tokat in the one on Henry Martyn. If a map was used for the Mohammed Yarn, the same map should be introduced at the beginning of this Yarn when the two Arabs are *en route* to Mecca. This connects up the Yarns in the boys' minds.

The point of contact might be the recalling the city where Mohammed was born—Mecca. Two Arabs over 1200 years later are riding camels just as Mohammed did, and to the same city.

Authorities.

Smith, *Life of Henry Martyn.*
Sargent, *Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Thomason.*

Two Arab Wanderers.

One day, more than a hundred years ago, two young Arabs, Abdallah and Sabat, rode on their camels toward

a city that was hidden among the tawny hills standing upon the skyline.

The sun was beginning to drop toward the edge of the desert away in the direction of the Red Sea. The shadows of the long swinging legs of the camels wavered in grotesque lines on the sand. There was a look of excited expectation in the eyes of the young Arabs; for, by sunset, their feet would walk the city of their dreams. They were bound for Mecca, the birthplace of Mohammed, the Holy City toward which every man of the Mohammedan world turns five times a day as he cries, "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the prophet of Allah." To have worshipped in Mecca before the sacred Kaaba and to have kissed the black stone in its wall—this was to make Paradise certain for them both. Having done that pilgrimage these two Arabs, Sabat and Abdallah, would be able to take the proud title of "Haji" which would proclaim to every man that they had been to Mecca—the Holy of Holies.

So they pressed on by the valley between the hills till they saw before them the roofs and the minarets of Mecca itself. As darkness rushed across the desert and the stars came out, the tired camels knelt in the courtyard of the Khan,[1] and Sabat and Abdallah alighted and stretched their cramped legs, and took their sleep.

These young men, Sabat and Abdallah, the sons of notable Arab chiefs, had struck up a great friendship. Now, each in company with his chum, they were together at the end of the greatest journey that an Arab can take.

As the first faint flush of pink touched the mountain beyond Mecca, the cry came from the minaret: "Come

[1] The inn of the Near East—a square courtyard with all the doors and windows inside, with primitive stables and bunks for the camel-men, and sometimes rooms for the well-to-do travellers.

to prayer. Prayer is better than sleep. There is no God but Allah." Sabat and Abdallah were already up and out, and that day they said the Mohammedan prayer before the Kaaba itself with other pilgrims who had come from many lands—from Egypt and Abyssinia, from Constantinople and Damascus, Baghdad and Bokhara, from the defiles of the Khyber Pass, from the streets of Delhi and the harbour of Zanzibar.

We do not know what Abdallah looked like. He was probably like most young Arab chieftains, a tall, sinewy man—brown-faced, dark-eyed, with hair and a short-cropped beard that were between brown and black. His friend Sabat was, however, so striking that even in that great crowd of many pilgrims people would turn to look at him. They would turn round, for one reason, because of Sabat's voice. Even when he was just talking to his friend his voice sounded like a roar; when he got excited and in a passion (as he very often did) it rolled like thunder and was louder than most men's shouting. As he spoke his large white teeth gleamed in his wide mouth. His brown face and black arched eyebrows were a dark setting for round eyes that flashed as he spoke. His black beard flowed over his tawny throat and neck. Gold earrings swung with his agitation and a gold chain gleamed round his neck. He wore a bright silk jacket with long sleeves, and long, loose-flowing trousers and richly embroidered shoes with turned-up toes. From a girdle round his waist hung a dagger whose handle and hilt flashed with jewels.

Abdallah and Sabat were better educated than most Arabs, for they could both read. But they were not men who could stay in one place and read and think in quiet. When they had finished their worship at Mecca, they determined to ride far away across the deserts

eastward, even to Kabul in the mountains of Afghanistan. So they rode, first northward up the great camel-route toward Damascus, and then eastward. In spite of robbers and hungry jackals, through mountain gorges, over streams, across the Syrian desert from oasis to oasis, and then across the Euphrates and the Tigris they went, till they had climbed rung by rung the mountain ranges that hold up the great plateau of Persia.

At last they broke in upon the rocky valleys of Afghanistan and came to the gateway of India—to Kabul. They presented themselves to Zeman Shah, the ruler of Afghanistan, and he was so taken with Abdallah's capacity that he asked him to be one of his officers in the court. So Abdallah stayed in Kabul. But the restless, fiery Sabat turned the face of his camel westward and rode back into Persia to the lovely city of Bokhara.

Abdallah the Daring.

In Kabul there was an Armenian whose name we do not know: but he owned a book printed in Arabic, a book that Abdallah could read. The Armenian lent it to him. There were hardly any books in Arabic, so Abdallah took this book and read it eagerly. As he read, he thought that he had never in all his life heard of such wonderful things, and he could feel in his very bones that they were true. He read four short true stories in this book: they were what we call the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. As he read, Abdallah saw in the stories Someone who was infinitely greater than Mohammed—One who was so strong and gentle that He was always helping children and women and people who were ill; so good that He always lived the very life that God willed; and so brave that He died rather than give in to evil men—our Lord Jesus Christ.

"I worship Him," said Abdallah in his heart. Then he did a very daring thing. He knew that if he turned Christian it would be the duty of Mohammedans to kill him. Why not keep quiet and say nothing about his change of heart? But he could not. He decided that he must come out in the open and confess the new Captain of his life. He was baptized a Christian.

In some groups the boys might discuss Abdallah's decision. Was he right in thinking that he must "come out in the open"?

The Moslems were furious. To save his life Abdallah fled on his camel westward to Bokhara. But the news that he had become a Christian flew even faster than he himself rode. As he went along the streets of Bokhara he saw his friend Sabat coming toward him. As a friend, Sabat desired to save Abdallah; but as a Moslem, the cruel law of Mohammed said that he must have him put to death. And Sabat was a fiery, hot-tempered Moslem.

"I had no pity," Sabat told his friends afterward. "I delivered him up to Morad Shah, the King."

So Abdallah was bound and carried before the Moslem judges. His friend Sabat stood by watching, just as Saul had stood watching them stone Stephen nearly eighteen centuries earlier.

"You shall be given your life and be set free," they said, "if you will spit upon the Cross and renounce Christ and say, 'There is no God but Allah.'"

"I refuse," said Abdallah.

A sword was brought forward and unsheathed. Abdallah's arm was stretched out: the sword was lifted—it flashed—and Abdallah's hand, cut clean off, fell on the ground, while the blood spurted from his arm.

"Your life will still be given you if you renounce Christ and proclaim Allah and Mohammed as His prophet."

This is how Sabat himself described what happened next. " Abdallah made no answer, but looked up steadfastly toward heaven, like Stephen, the first martyr, his eyes streaming with tears. He looked at me," said Sabat, " but it was with the countenance of forgiveness."

Abdallah's other arm was stretched out, again the sword flashed and fell. His other hand dropped to the ground. He stood there bleeding and handless. He bowed his head and his neck was bared to the sword. Again the blade flashed. He was beheaded, and Sabat—Sabat who had ridden a thousand miles with his friend and had faced with him the blistering sun of the desert and the snow-blizzard of the mountain—saw Abdallah's head lie there on the ground and the dead body carried away.

Abdallah had died because he was faithful to Jesus Christ and because Sabat had obeyed the law of Mohammed.

A short discussion might range round Sabat's action. Which is it best to be, a faithful Christian like Abdallah—brave, forgiving, never flinching and ready to die in loyalty—or a faithful Mohammedan like Sabat, ready to make his friend die because he had denied Mohammed and accepted Jesus Christ? Was it Sabat or his creed that was really bad? We shall see what Sabat was like later. The cruelty of the Christian inquisition of the Middle Ages was false to the Christian creed; but Sabat was true to the Moslem law.

The Old Sabat and the New.

The news spread through Bokhara like a forest fire. They could hardly believe that a man would die for the Christian faith like that. As Sabat told his friends afterward, " All Bokhara seemed to say, ' What new thing is this ? ' "

But Sabat was in agony of mind. Nothing that he could do would take away from his eyes the vision of his friend's face as Abdallah had looked at him when his

hands were being cut off. He plunged out on to the camel tracks of Asia to try to forget. He wandered far and he wandered long, but he could not forget or find rest for his tortured mind.

At last he sailed away on the seas and landed on the coast of India at Madras. The British East India Company then ruled in India, and they gave Sabat a post in the civil courts as mufti, *i.e.* as an expounder of the law of Mohammed. He spent most of his time in a coast town north of Madras, called Vizagapatam.[1] A friend handed to him there a little book in his native language—Arabic. It was another translation of those stories that Abdallah had read in Kabul—it was the New Testament.[2]

Sabat sat reading this New Book. He then took up the book of Mohammed's law—the Koran—which it was his daily work to explain. He compared the two. "The truth came"—as he himself said—"like a flood of light." He too began to worship Jesus Christ, whose life he had read now for the first time in the New Testament. Sabat decided that he must follow in Abdallah's footsteps. He became a Christian.[3] He was then twenty-seven years of age.

The Brother's Dagger.

In the world of the East news travels like magic by Arab dhow (sailing ship) and camel caravan. Very quickly the news was in Arabia that Sabat had renounced Mohammed and become a Christian. At once Sabat's brother rose, girded on his dagger, left the tents of his tribe, mounted his camel and coursed across Arabia to

[1] Pronounce Vi-zah'-ga-pat-ahm.

[2] The Arabic New Testament revised by Solomon Negri and sent to India by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge in the middle of the eighteenth century.

[3] Baptized "Nathaniel" at Madras by the Rev. Dr Kerr.

a port. There he took ship for Madras. Landing, he disguised himself as an Indian and went up to Vizagapatam to the house where his brother Sabat was living.

Sabat saw this Indian, as he appeared to be, standing before him. He suspected nothing. Suddenly the disguised brother put his hand within his robe, seized his dagger, and leaping at Sabat made a fierce blow at him. Sabat flung out his arm. He spoilt his brother's aim, but he was too late to save himself. He was wounded, but not killed. The brother threw off his disguise, and Sabat—remembering the forgiveness of Abdallah—forgave his brother, gave him many presents, and sent loving messages to his mother.

Sabat decided that he could no longer work as an expounder of Moslem law: he wanted to do work that would help to spread the Christian Faith. He went away north to Calcutta, and there he joined the great men who were working at the task of translating the Bible into different languages and printing them. This work pleased Sabat, for was it not through reading an Arabic New Testament that all his own life had been changed?

Because Sabat knew Persian as well as Arabic he was sent to help a very clever young chaplain from England named Henry Martyn, who was busily at work translating the New Testament into Persian and Arabic. So Sabat went up the Ganges to Cawnpore with Henry Martyn.

Sabat's fiery temper nearly drove Martyn wild. His was a flaming Arab spirit, hot-headed and impetuous; yet he would be ready to die for the man he cared for; proud and often ignorant, yet simple—as Martyn said, "an artless child of the desert."

Sabat's knowledge of Persian was not really so good as he himself thought it was, and some of the Indian translators at Calcutta criticized his translation. At this

he got furiously angry, and, like St Peter, the fiery, impetuous apostle, he denied Jesus Christ and spoke against Christianity.

With his heart burning with rage and his great voice thundering with anger, Sabat left his friends, went aboard ship and sailed down the Bay of Bengal by the Indo-Chinese coast till he came to Penang, where he began to live as a trader.

But by this time the fire of his anger had burnt itself out. He—again like Peter—remembered his denial of his Master, and when he saw in a Penang newspaper an article saying that the famous Sabat, who had become a Christian and then become a Mohammedan again, had come to live in their city, he wrote a letter which was published in the newspaper at Penang declaring that he was now—and for good and all—a Christian.

A British officer named Colonel MacInnes was stationed at Penang. Sabat went to him. "My mind is full of great sorrow," he said, "because I denied Jesus Christ. I have not had a moment's peace since Satan made me do that bad work. I did it for revenge. I only want to do one thing with my life: to spend it in undoing this evil that has come through my denial."

Sabat left the house of the Mohammedan with whom he was living in Penang. He found an old friend of his named Johannes, an Armenian Christian merchant, who had lived in Madras in the very days when Sabat first became a Christian. Every night Johannes the Armenian and Sabat the Arab got out their Bibles, and far into the night Sabat would explain their meaning to Johannes.

The Prince from Sumatra.

One day all Penang was agog with excitement because a brown Prince from Acheen, a Malay State in the island

of Sumatra, had suddenly sailed into the harbour. He was in flight from his own land, where rebels had attacked him. The people of Acheen were wild and ferocious; many of them were cannibals.

"I will join you in helping to recover your throne," said Sabat to the fugitive Prince. "I am going," said Sabat to Colonel MacInnes, "to see if I can carry the message of Christianity to this fierce people."

So Sabat and the Prince, with others, went aboard a sailing ship and crossed the Strait of Malacca to Sumatra. They landed, and for long the struggle with the rebels swayed from side to side. The Prince was so pleased with Sabat that he made him his Prime Minister. But the struggle dragged on and on; there seemed to be no hope of triumph. At last Sabat decided to go back to Penang. One day he left the Prince and started off, but soldiers of the rebel-chief Syfoolalim captured him.

Great was the joy of the rebels—their powerful enemy was in their hands! They bound him, threw him into a boat, hoisted him aboard a sailing ship and clapped him in the stifling darkness of the hold. As he lay there he pierced his arm to make it bleed, and, with the blood that came out, wrote on a piece of paper that was smuggled out and sent to Penang to Colonel MacInnes.

The agonies that Sabat suffered in the gloom and filth of that ship's hold no one will ever know. We can learn from the words that he wrote in the blood from his own body that they loaded worse horrors upon him because he was a Christian. All the scene is black, but out of the darkness comes a voice that makes us feel that Sabat was faithful at the end. In his last letter to Colonel MacInnes he told how he was now ready (like his friend Abdallah) to die for the sake of that Master whom he had in his rage denied.

Then one day his cruel gaolers came to the hold where he lay, and, binding his limbs, thrust him into a sack, which they then closed. In the choking darkness of the sack he was carried on deck and dragged to the side of the ship. He heard the lapping of the waves. He felt himself lifted and then hurled out into the air, and down—down with a crash into the waters of the sea, which closed over him for ever.

Points for discussion arise mainly out of the contrasts and similarities of different personalities, *e.g.*:

Who was braver, Abdallah or Sabat?

In what was Abdallah like St Stephen the Martyr?

In what was Sabat like Saul the Pharisee and (afterwards) like St Peter?

IV

A RACE AGAINST TIME

Henry Martyn

(Dates, b. 1781, d. 1812. Time of Incident, 1810-12)

Leader's Aim.

To reveal what courage and will-power and brain-power can work when inspired with the love of God and of man.

Introductory Notes.

This is not a Yarn of a single thrilling adventure, but the story of the life of a man with a frail body, driving steadily through great hardships and perils, and giving up life itself to achieve a desired end for the good of other people. It is a story of extraordinary courage and will-power.

If a map has already been drawn for the Sabat and Abdallah Yarn (Yarn III.), it should be used again for this Yarn. Such a method would secure the further psychological advantage of connecting this story up with Sabat and with Mohammed from the outset.

In such a case the point of contact will be made at once by asking the boys what they can remember about Sabat, and recalling how he was helping a man named Henry Martyn at Cawnpore to translate the New Testament into Persian; then proceed: "We are now going to have a Yarn about Martyn, who did braver things than ever Sabat attempted, and went into the very country where Abdallah had his hands cut off and was beheaded for being a Christian."

Outline of Early Life.

Henry Martyn was born at Truro, in Cornwall, on February 18, 1781, and was educated at Truro Grammar School from the age of seven to fifteen. He was violently passionate, sensitive, and physically rather a fragile boy, and at school was protected from bullies by a big boy, the son of Admiral Kempthorne. He left school at the age of fifteen and shot and read till he was seventeen. In 1797 he became an undergraduate at St John's College, Cambridge. He was still very passionate. For instance, when a man was "ragging" him in the College Hall at dinner, he was so furious that he flung a knife at him, which stuck quivering in the panelling of the wall. Kempthorne, his old friend, was at Cambridge

with him. They used to read the Bible together, and a great preacher, Charles Simeon, had very much influence over Martyn. He became a real Christian and fought hard to overcome his violent temper.

He was a very clever scholar, and became Senior Wrangler in 1801 (*i.e.* the most brilliant mathematician in the University in that year) and a Fellow of Jesus College in 1802. He at that time took orders in the Church of England. He became very keen on reading about missionary work, *e.g.* Carey's story of nine years' work in *Periodical Accounts*, and the L.M.S. Report on Vanderkemp in South Africa. "I read nothing else while it lasted," he said of the Vanderkemp report.

He was accepted as a chaplain of the East India Company. They could not sail till Nelson gave the word, because the French were waiting to capture them. Five men-of-war convoyed them when they sailed in 1805. They waited off Ireland, because the immediate invasion of England by Napoleon was threatened. On board, Martyn worked hard at Hindustani, Bengali and Portuguese. He already knew Greek, Latin and Hebrew. He arrived at Madras (South India) on April 22, and at Calcutta on May 16th, and thence to Cawnpore. It is at this point that the Yarn begins.

AUTHORITY.

Smith, *Life of Henry Martyn*

A voice like thunder, speaking in a strange tongue, shouted across an Indian garden one night in 1809.

The new moon, looking—as one who was there that night said—"like a ball of ebony in an ivory cup," threw a cold light over the palm trees and aloes, on the man who was speaking and on those who were seated around him at the table in the bungalow. Beyond the garden the life of Cawnpore moved in its many streets; the shout of a donkey-driver, the shrill of a bugle from the barracks broke sharply through the muffled sounds of the city. The June wind, heavy with the waters of the Ganges which flows past Cawnpore, made the night insufferably hot. But the heat did not trouble Sabat, the wild son of the Arabian desert, who was talking—as he always did—in a roaring voice that was louder than most men's shouting. He was telling the story of Abdallah's brave death as a Christian martyr.[1]

[1] See Yarn III.

Quietly listening to Sabat's voice—though he could not understand what he was saying—was a young Italian, Padre Julius Cæsar, a monk of the order of the Jesuits. On his head was a little skull-cap, over his body a robe of fine purple satin held with a girdle of twisted silk.

Near him sat an Indian scholar—on his dark head a full turban, and about him richly-coloured robes. On the other side sat a little, thin, copper-coloured Bengali dressed in white, and a British officer in his scarlet and gold uniform, with his wife, who has told us the story of that evening.

Not one of these brightly dressed people was, however, the strongest power there. A man in black clothes was the real centre of the group. Very slight in build, not tall, clean-shaven, with a high forehead and sensitive lips, young Henry Martyn seemed a stripling beside the flaming Arab. Yet Sabat, with all his sound and fury, was no match for the swift-witted, clear-brained young Englishman. Henry Martyn was a chaplain in the army of the East India Company, which then ruled in India.

He was the only one of those who were listening to Sabat who could understand what he was saying. When Sabat had finished his story, Martyn turned, and, in his clear, musical voice translated it from the Persian into Latin mixed with Italian for Padre Julius Cæsar, into Hindustani for the Indian scholar, into Bengali for the Bengal gentleman, and into English for the British officer and his wife. Martyn could also talk to Sabat himself both in Arabic and in Persian.

As Martyn listened to the rolling sentences of Sabat, the Christian Arab, he seemed to see the lands beyond India, away across the Khyber Pass, where Sabat had travelled—Mesopotamia, Arabia, Persia.

Ask the boy who made the brown paper map to put in Cawnpore on the Ganges, and then recall Persia, Mesopotamia and Arabia (see Yarn III.). Or produce the map made for the Mohammed Yarn and recall how Islam had spread over all those lands; then put in these place names.

Henry Martyn knew that in all those lands the people were Mohammedans. He wanted one thing above everything else in the world: that was to give them all the chance of doing what Sabat and Abdallah had done—the chance of reading in their own languages the one book in the world that could tell them that God was a Father—the book of letters and of biographies that we call the New Testament.

The Toil of Brain.

There was not in the world a copy of the New Testament in good Persian. To make one Henry Martyn slaved hard, far into the hot, sultry Indian nights, with scores of mosquitoes "pinging" round his lamp and his head, grinding at his Persian grammar, so that he could translate the life of Jesus Christ into that language.

Even while he was listening to Sabat's story in the bungalow at Cawnpore, Martyn knew that he was so ill that he could not live for many years more. The doctor said that he must leave India for a time to be in a healthier place. Should he go home to England, where all his friends were? He wanted that; but much more he wanted to go on with his work. So he asked the doctor if he might go to Persia on the way home, and he agreed.

The brown paper map should be open and each stage followed and marked upon it with crayon.

So Martyn went down from Cawnpore to Calcutta, and in a boat down the Hoogli river to the little Arab coasting sailing ship the *Hummoudi*, which hoisted sail and started on its voyage round India to Bombay.

Martyn read while on board the Old Testament in the original Hebrew and the New Testament in the original Greek, so that he might understand them better and make a more perfect translation into Persian. He read the Koran of Mohammed so that he could argue with the Persians about it. And he worked hard at Arabic grammar, and read books in Persian. Yet he was for ever cracking jokes with his fellow travellers, cooped up in the little ship on the hot tropical seas.

From Bombay the governor granted Martyn a passage up the Persian Gulf in the *Benares*, a ship in the Indian Navy that was going on a cruise to finish the exciting work of hunting down the fierce Arab pirates of the Persian Gulf. So on Lady Day 1811 the sailors got her under weigh and tacked northward up the Gulf, till at last, on May 21, the roofs and minarets of Bushire hove in sight. Martyn, leaning over the bulwarks, could see the town jutting out into the Gulf on a spit of sand and the sea almost surrounding it. That day he set foot for the first time on the soil of Persia.

Across Persia on a Pony.

Aboard ship Martyn had allowed his beard and moustache to grow. When he landed at Bushire he bought and wore the clothes of a Persian gentleman, so that he should escape from attracting everybody's notice by wearing clothes such as the people had never seen before.

No one who had seen the pale, clean-shaven clergyman in black silk coat and trousers in Cawnpore would have recognized the Henry Martyn who rode out that night on his pony with an Armenian servant, Zechariah of Isfahan, on his long one hundred and seventy mile journey from Bushire to Shiraz. He wore a conical cap of black Astrakhan fur, great baggy trousers of blue,

bright red leather boots, a light tunic of chintz, and over that a flowing cloak.

They went out through the gates of Bushire on to the great plain of burning sand that stretched away for ninety miles ahead of them. They travelled by night, because the day was intolerably hot, but even at midnight the heat was over 100 degrees. It was a fine moonlight night; the stars sparkled over the plain. The bells tinkled on the mules' necks as they walked across the sand. All else was silent.

At last dawn broke. Martyn pitched his little tent under a tree, the only shelter he could get. Gradually the heat grew more and more intense. He was already so ill that it was difficult to travel.

"When the thermometer was above 112 degrees—fever heat," says Martyn, "I began to lose my strength fast. It became intolerable. I wrapped myself up in a blanket and all the covering I could get to defend myself from the air. By this means the moisture was kept a little longer upon the body. I thought I should have lost my senses. The thermometer at last stood at 126 degrees. I concluded that death was inevitable."

At last the sun went down: the thermometer crept lower: it was night and time to start again. But Martyn had not slept or eaten. He could hardly sit upright on his pony. Yet he set out and travelled on through the night.

Next morning he had a little shelter of leaves and branches made, and an Arab poured water on the leaves and on Martyn all day to try to keep some of the frightful heat from him. But even then the heat almost slew him. So they marched on through another night and then camped under a grove of date palms.

"I threw myself on the burning ground and slept,"

Martyn wrote. "When the tent came up I awoke in a burning fever. All day I had recourse to the wet towel, which kept me alive, but would allow of no sleep."

At nine that night they struck camp. The ground threw up the heat that it had taken from the sun during the day. So frightfully hot was the air that even at midnight Martyn could not travel without a wet towel round his face and neck.

As the night drew on the plain grew rougher: then it began to rise to the foothills and mountains. At last the pony and mules were clambering up rough steep paths so wild that there was (as Martyn said) "nothing to mark the road but the rocks being a little more worn in one place than in another." Suddenly in the darkness the pony stopped; dimly through the gloom Martyn could see that they were on the edge of a tremendous precipice. A single step more would have plunged him over, to be smashed on the rocks hundreds of feet below. Martyn did not move or try to guide the beast: he knew that the pony himself was the safest guide. In a minute or two the animal moved, and step by step clambered carefully up the rock-strewn mountain-side.

At last they came out on the mountain top, but only to find that they were on the edge of a flat high plain—a tableland. The air was pure and fresher; the mules and the travellers revived. Martyn's pony began to trot briskly along. So, as dawn came up, they came in sight of a great courtyard built by the king of that country to refresh pilgrims.

Through night after night they tramped, across plateau and mountain range, till they climbed the third range, and then plunged by a winding rocky path into a wide valley where, at a great town called Kazrun, in a garden of cypress trees was a summer-house.

Martyn lay down on the floor but could not sleep, though he was horribly weary. "There seemed," he said, "to be fire within my head, my skin like a cinder." His heart beat like a hammer.

They went on climbing another range of mountains, first tormented by mosquitoes, then frozen with cold; Martyn was so overwhelmed with sleep that he could not sit on his pony and had to hurry ahead to keep awake and then sit down with his back against a rock where he fell asleep in a second, and had to be shaken to wake up when Zechariah, the Armenian mule driver, came up to where he was.

They had at last climbed the four mountain rungs of the ladder to Persia, and came out on June 11th, 1811, on the great plain where the city of Shiraz stands. Here he found the host Jaffir Ali Khan, to whom he carried his letters of introduction. Martyn in his Persian dress, seated on the ground, was feasted with curries and rice, sweets cooled with snow and perfumed with rose water, and coffee.

Ali Khan had a lovely garden of orange trees, and in the garden Martyn sat.. Ill as he was, he worked day in and day out to translate the life of Jesus Christ in the New Testament from the Greek language into pure and simple Persian. The kind host put up a tent for Martyn in the garden, close to some beautiful vines, from which hung lovely bunches of purple grapes. By the side of his tent ran a clear stream of running water. All the evening nightingales sang sweetly and mournfully.

As he sat there at his work, men came hundreds of miles to talk with this holy man, as they felt him to be. Moslems—they yet travelled even from Baghdad and Bosra and Isfahan to hear this "infidel" speak of Jesus Christ, and to argue as to which was the true religion. Prince

Abbas Mirza invited him to come to speak with him; and as Martyn entered the Prince's courtyard a hundred fountains began to send up jets of water in his honour.

Why were these Moslems so anxious to talk with a man whom they would call an infidel—whom (Mohammed said) it was a virtue to kill? It was first, certainly, because all those who came to him saw at once that he really was a man who knew God; and they went away and told others about him. Secondly, these Persian Moslems were of the Shi'ah sect, who are more liberal, less orthodox, and more tolerant than the Arabian and other Moslems.

At last they came to him in such numbers that Martyn was obliged to say to many of them that he could not see them. He hated sending them away. What was it forced him to do so?

The Race against Time.

It was because he was running a race against time. He knew that he could not live very long, because the disease that had smitten his lungs was gaining ground every day. And the thing that he had come to Persia for—the object that had made him face the long voyage, the frightful heat and the freezing cold of the journey, the life thousands of miles from his home in Cornwall—was that he might finish such a translation of the New Testament into Persian that men should love to read years and years after he had died.

So each day Martyn finished another page or two of the book, written in lovely Persian letters. He began the work within a week of reaching Shiraz, and in seven months (February 1812) it was finished. Three more months were spent in writing out very beautiful copies of the whole of the New Testament in this new translation, to be presented to the Shah of Persia and to the heir to the throne, Prince Abbas Mirza.

Then he started away on a journey right across

Persia to find the Shah and Prince so that he might give his precious books to them. On the way he fell ill with great fever; he was so weak and giddy that he could not stand. One night his head ached so that it almost drove him mad; he shook all over with fever; then a great sweat broke out. He was almost unconscious with weakness, but at midnight when the call came to start he mounted his horse and, as he says, "set out, rather dead than alive." So he pressed on in great weakness till he reached Tabriz, and there met the British Ambassador.

Martyn was rejoiced, and felt that all his pains were repaid when Sir Gore Ouseley said that he himself would present the Sacred Book to the Shah and the Prince. When the day came to give the book to Prince Abbas, poor Henry Martyn was so weak that he could not rise from his bed. Before the other copy could be presented to the Shah, Martyn had died. This is how it came about.

The Last Trail.

His great work was done. The New Testament was finished. He sent a copy to the printers in India. He could now go home to England and try to get well again. He started out on horseback with two Armenian servants and a Turkish guide. He was making along the old track that has been the road from Asia to Europe for thousands of years. His plan was to travel across Persia, through Armenia and over the Black Sea to Constantinople, and so back to England.

For forty-five days he moved on, often going as much as ninety miles, and generally as much as sixty in a day. He slept in filthy inns where fleas and lice abounded and mosquitoes tormented him. Horses, cows, buffaloes and sheep would pass through his sleeping-room, and the

stench of the stables nearly poisoned him. Yet he was so ill that often he could hardly keep his seat on his horse.

He travelled through deep ravines and over high mountain passes and across vast plains. His head ached till he felt it would split; he could not eat; fever came on. He shook with ague. Yet his remorseless Turkish guide, Hassan, dragged him along, because he wanted to get the journey over and go back home.

At last one day Martyn got rest on damp ground in a hovel, his eyes and forehead feeling as though a great fire burnt in them. "I was almost frantic," he wrote. Martyn was, in fact, dying; yet Hassan compelled him to ride a hundred and seventy miles of mountain track to Tokat. Here, on October 6th, 1812, he wrote in his journal:

"No horses to be had, I had an unexpected repose. I sat in the orchard and thought with sweet comfort and peace of my God—in solitude my Company, my Friend, my Comforter."

It was the last word he was ever to write.

Alone, without a human friend by him, he fell asleep. But the book that he had written with his life-blood, the Persian New Testament, was printed, and has told thousands of Persians in far places, where no Christian man has penetrated, that story of the love of God that is shown in Jesus Christ.

V

A FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE OF TO-DAY

E. D. Cushman
(Time, 1914-1920)

LEADER'S AIM.

To show the power of a brave Christian life to win the love and confidence of all races and creeds.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

Konia (Iconium), the scene of this Yarn, is the natural capital and administrative centre of Asia Minor (see Map), and was the capital of the early Turkish Sultans about the time of the Norman conquest.

The hospital at Konia in which the events happened is supported by Christian folk in America, and was established by two American medical missionaries, Dr William S. Dodd and Dr Wilfred Post, with Miss Cushman, the Head Nurse, sharing the general superintendence: other members of the staff are Haralambos, their Armenian dispenser and druggist, and Kleoniki, a Greek nurse trained by Miss Cushman. The author of these Yarns spent the early spring of 1914 at the hospital in Konia, when all the people named above were at work there.

AUTHORITIES.

Notes taken during author's visit. Hospital reports and correspondence from Dr William Dodd, Miss Cushman, and especially Dr Edward M. Dodd (son of the foregoing, and now medical missionary in Tabriz, Persia).

The Turk in Bed.

The cold, clear sunlight of a winter morning on the high plateau of Asia Minor shone into the clean, white ward of a hospital in Konia. The tinkle of camel-bells as a caravan of laden beasts swung by, the quick pad-

pad of donkeys' hoofs, the howl of a Turkish dog, the cry of a child—these and other sounds of the city came through the open window of the ward.

On a bed in the corner of the ward lay a bearded man —a Turk—who lived in this ancient city of Konia (the Iconium of St Paul's day). His brown face and grizzled beard were oddly framed in the white of the spotless pillow and sheets.

His face turned to the door as it opened and the matron entered. The eyes of the Turk as he lay there followed her as she walked toward one of her deft, gentle-handed assistant nurses who, in their neat uniforms with their olive-brown faces framed in dark hair, went from bed to bed tending the patients; giving medicine to a boy here, shaking up a pillow for a sick man there, taking a patient's temperature yonder. Those skilled nurses were Armenian girls. The Armenians are a Christian nation, who have been ruled by the Turks for centuries and often have been massacred by them; yet these Armenian girls were nursing the Turks in the hospital. But the matron of the hospital was not a Turk, nor an Armenian. She had come four thousand miles across the sea to heal the Turks and the Armenians in this land. She was an American.

The Turk in bed turned his eyes from the nurses to a picture on the wall. A frown came on his face. He began to mutter angry words into his beard.

As a Turk he had always been taught, even as a little boy, that the great Prophet Mohammed had told them they must have no pictures of prophets, and he knew from what he had heard that the picture on the wall showed the face of a prophet. It was a picture of a man with a kind, strong face, dressed in garments of the lands of the East, and wearing a short beard. He was stooping

down healing a little child. It was our Lord Jesus Christ the Great Physician.

As Miss Cushman—for that was the name of the matron—moved toward his bed, the Turk burst into angry speech.

"Have that picture taken down," he said roughly, pointing to it. She turned to look at the picture and then back at him, and said words like these: "No, that is the picture of Jesus, the great Doctor who lived long ago and taught the people that God is Love. It is because He taught that, and has called me to follow in His steps, that I am here to help to heal you."

But the Turk, who was not used to having women disobeying his commands, again ordered angrily that the picture should be taken down. But the American missionary-nurse said gently, but firmly: "No, the picture must stay there to remind us of Jesus. If you cannot endure to see the picture there, then if you wish you may leave the hospital, of course."

And so she passed on. The Turk lay in his bed and thought it over. He wished to get well. If the doctors in this hospital—Dr Dodd and Dr Post—did not attend him, and if the nurses did not give him his medicine, he would not. He therefore decided to make no more fuss about the picture. So he lay looking at it, and was rather surprised to find in a few days that he liked to see it there, and that he wanted to hear more and more about the great Prophet-Doctor, Jesus.

Then he had another tussle of wills with Miss Cushman, the white nurse from across the seas. It came about in this way. All women who are Mohammedans keep their faces veiled, but the Armenian Christian nurses had their faces uncovered.

"Surely they are shameless women," he thought in

his heart. "And they are Armenians too—Christian infidels!" So he began to treat them rudely. But the white nurse would not stand that.

Miss Cushman went and stood by his bed and said: "I want you to remember that these nurses of mine are here to help you to get well. They are to you even as daughters tending their father; and you must behave to them as a good father to good daughters."

So the Turk lay in bed and thought about that also. It took him a long time to take it in, for he had always been taught to hate the Armenians and to think low thoughts about their womenfolk. But in the end he learnt that lesson also.

At last the Turk got well, left his bed, and went away. He was so thankful that he was better that he was ready to do just anything in the world that Miss Cushman wanted him to do. The days passed on in the hospital, and always the white nurse from across the seas and the Armenian nurses tended the Turkish and other patients, and healed them through the heats of that summer.

War and Massacre.

As summer came near to its end there broke on the world the dreadful day when all Europe went to war. Miss Cushman's colleagues, the American doctors at the hospital, left Konia for service in the war. Soon Turkey entered the war. The fury of the Turks against the Armenians burst out into a flame. You might see in Konia two or three Turks sitting in the shadow of a little saddler's shop by the street smoking their hubble-bubble water-pipes, and saying words like these:

"The Armenians are plotting to help the enemies of Turkey. We shall have to kill them all."

"Yes, wipe them out—the accursed infidels!"

Why should the Turks hate the Armenians? (a) Islam teaches them to hate the "infidel" Christians. (b) They are of a foreign race and foreign religion in countries ruled (till 1920) by Turks, though the Armenians were there first. (c) The Armenians are cleverer business men than the Turks, who hate to see their subjects richer than themselves, and hope by massacre to seize Armenian wealth.

Yet all the time, as the wounded Turks were sent from the Gallipoli front back to Konia, the Armenian nurses in the hospital there were healing them. But the Turkish Government gave its orders. Vile bands of Turkish soldiers rushed down on the different cities and villages of the Armenians.[1] One sunny morning a troop of Turkish soldiers came dashing into a quiet little Armenian town among the hills. An order was given. The Turks smashed in the doors of the houses. A father stood up before his family; a bayonet was driven through him and soldiers dashed over his dead body; they looted the house; they smashed up his home; others seized the mother and the daughters—the mother had a baby in her arms; the baby was flung on the ground and then picked up dead on the point of a bayonet; and, though the mother and daughters were not bayoneted then, it would have been better to die at once than to suffer the unspeakable horrors that came to them.

And that happened in hundreds of villages and cities to hundreds of thousands of Armenians, while hundreds of thousands more scattered down the mountain passes in flight towards Konia.

The Orphan Boys and Girls.

As Miss Cushman and her Armenian nurses looked out through the windows of the hospital, their hearts were sad as they saw some of these Armenian refugees trailing along the road like walking skeletons. What

[1] In telling this part of the Yarn to younger boys discretion should be exercised.

was to happen to them? It was very dangerous for anyone to show that they were friends with the Armenians, but the white matron was as brave as she was kind; so she went out to do what she could to help them.

One day she saw a little boy so thin that the bones seemed almost to be coming through his skin. He was very dirty; his hair was all matted together; and there were bugs and fleas in his clothes and in his hair. The hospital was so full that not another could be taken in. But the boy would certainly die if he were not looked after properly. His father and his mother had both been slain by the Turks; he did not know where his brothers were. He was an orphan alone in all the world.

Miss Cushman knew Armenian people in Konia, and she went to one of these homes and told them about the poor boy and arranged to pay them some money for the cost of his food. So she made a new home for him. The next day she found another boy, and then a girl, and so she went on and on, discovering little orphan Armenian boys and girls who had nobody to care for them, and finding them homes—until she had over six hundred orphans being cared for. It is certain that nearly all of them would have died if she had not looked after them.

So Miss Cushman gathered the six hundred Armenian children together into an orphanage, that was half for the boys and half for the girls. She was a hundred times better than the "Old Woman who Lived in a Shoe," because, though she had so many children, she *did* know what to do. She taught them to make nearly everything for themselves. In the mornings you would see half the boys figuring away at their sums or learning to write and read, while the other boys were hammering and sawing and planing at the carpenter's bench; cutting

leather and sewing it to make shoes for the other boys and girls; cutting petrol tins up into sheets to solder into kettles and saucepans; and cutting and stitching cloth to make clothes. A young officer who went to see them wrote home, "The kids look happy and healthy and as clean as a whistle."

The People on the Plain.

As Miss Cushman looked out again from the hospital window she saw men coming from the country into the city jogging along on little donkeys.

"In the villages all across the plain," they said to her, "are Armenian boys and girls, and men and women. They are starving. Many are without homes, wandering about in rags till they simply lie down on the ground, worn out, and die."

Miss Cushman sent word to friends far away in America, and they sent food from America to Turkey in ships, and over £200,000 of money to help the starving children. So Miss Cushman got together her boys and girls and some other helpers, and soon they were very busy all day and every day wrapping food and clothes into parcels. Next a caravan of snorting camels came swinging in to the courtyard and, grumbling and rumbling, knelt down, to be loaded up. The parcels were done up in big bales and strapped on to the camels' backs. Then at a word from the driver the camels rose from their knees and went lurching out from Konia into the country, over the rough, rolling tracks, to carry to the people the food and clothes that would keep them alive. The wonderful thing is that these camels were led by a Turk belonging to the people who hate the Armenians, yet he was carrying food and clothes to them! Why did this Turk in Konia go on countless journeys, travelling over thousands

of miles with tens of thousands of parcels containing wheat for bread and new shirts and skirts and other clothes for the Armenians, and never lose a single parcel?

Why did he do it?

This is the reason. Before the war when he was ill in the hospital[1] Miss Cushman had nursed him with the help of her Armenian girls, and had made him better; he was so thankful that he would just run to do anything that she wished him to do.

To Stay or not to Stay?

But at last Miss Cushman—worn out with all this work—fell ill with a terrible fever. For some time it was not certain that she would not die of it; for a whole month she lay sick in great weakness. President Wilson had at this time broken off relations between America and Turkey. The Turk now thought of the American as an enemy; and Miss Cushman was an American. She was in peril. What was she to do?

"It is not safe to stay," said her friends. "You will be practically a prisoner of war. You will be at the mercy of the Turks. You know what the Turk is—as treacherous as he is cruel. They can, if they wish, rob you or deport you anywhere they like. Go now while the path is open—before it is too late. You are in the very middle of Turkey, hundreds of miles from any help. The dangers are terrible."

As soon as she was well enough Miss Cushman went to the Turkish Governor of Konia, a bitter Mohammedan who had organized the massacre of forty thousand Armenians,[2] to say that she had been asked to go

[1] Recall the beginning of this Yarn.

[2] At the time of writing (1920) he is in prison in Constantinople to be tried for this massacre.

back to America. "What shall you do if I stay?" she asked.

"I beg you to stay," said the Governor. "You shall be protected. You need have no fear."

"Your words are beautiful," she replied. "But if America and Turkey go to war you will deport me."

If she stayed she knew the risks under his rule. She was still weak from her illness. There was no colleague by her side to help her. There seemed to be every reason why she should sail away back to America. But as she sat thinking it over she saw before her the hospital full of wounded soldiers, the six hundred orphans who looked to her for help, the plain of a hundred villages to which she was sending food. No one could take her place.

Yet she was weak and tired after her illness and, in America, rest and home, friends and safety called to her.

"It was," she wrote later to her friends, "a heavy problem to know what to do with the orphans and other helpless people who depended on me for life."

At this point these questions might be asked of the boys—What would you have done? What do you think she did? Why do you think so? For what reason should she face these perils?

Not in the heat of battle, but in cool quiet thought, all alone among enemies, she saw her path and took it. She did not count her life her own. She was ready to give her life for her friends of all nations. She decided to stay in the heart of the enemies' country and serve her God and the children. Many a man has had the Victoria Cross for an act that called for less calm courage. That deed showed her to be one of the great undecorated heroes and heroines of the lonely path.

So she stayed on.

The subsequent record might make the Yarn too long and complex, but for the leader's information it may be summarized thus.—From all over the Turkish Empire prisoners were sent to Konia. There was great confusion in dealing with them, so the people of Konia asked Miss Cushman to look after them; they even wrote to the Turkish Government at Constantinople to tell them to write to her to invite her to do this work. There was a regular hue and cry that she should be appointed, because everyone knew her strong will, her power of organizing, her just treatment, her good judgment, and her loving heart. So at last she accepted the invitation. Prisoners of eleven different nationalities she helped—including British, French, Italian, Russian, Indians and Arabs. She arranged for the nursing of the sick, the feeding of the hungry, the freeing of some from prison.

She went on right through the war to the end and beyond the end, caring for her orphans, looking after the sick in hospital, sending food and clothes to all parts of the country, helping the prisoners. Without caring whether they were British or Turkish, Armenian or Indian, she gave her help to those who needed it. And because of her splendid courage thousands of boys and girls and men and women are alive and well, who—without her—would have starved and frozen to death.

To-day, in and around Konia (a British officer who has been there tells us), the people do not say, "If Allah wills," but "If Miss Cushman wills!" It is that officer's way of letting us see how, through her brave daring, her love, and her hard work, that served everybody, British, Armenian, Turk, Indian, and Arab, she has become the uncrowned Queen of Konia, whose bidding all the people do because she only cares to serve them, not counting her own life dear to her.

VI

THE FRIEND OF THE WILD ARAB

Archibald Forder (1)
(Time of Incident, 1900-1901)

LEADER'S AIM.

To show how a man's love and his faith in God enabled him to make friends with fierce Arabs, and so to carry the Gospel into the very heart of Islam.

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

Archibald Forder, as an eight-year-old schoolboy, heard Robert Moffat of South Africa speaking as a missionary deputation in Salisbury, Wilts, in August 1874. From that date he wished to go abroad as a missionary.

At the age of thirteen he left home and was apprenticed to the grocery and baking business. In 1888 he married. At this time he read in a magazine about missionary work in Kerak beyond Jordan—in Moab among the Arabs—where a young married man ready to rough it was needed. He sailed with his wife for Kerak on September 3, 1891, and left Jerusalem by camel on September 30 on the four days' journey across Jordan to Kerak. Three times they were robbed by brigands on this journey. Mr Forder worked there till 1896. He then left and travelled through America to secure support for an attempt to penetrate Central Arabia with the first effort to carry the Gospel of Jesus Christ there.

This Yarn and the next tell the story of Forder's pioneer journey into the Arabian desert. One of the boys should be asked to mark the journey on an outline map, putting in the names of the main stopping-places as they are reached. (See map on p. 73).

AUTHORITY.

Forder, *With the Arabs in Tent and Town.*

The Adventure into the Desert.

Two pack-horses were stamping their hoofs impatiently outside a house in Jerusalem in the early

morning a week or two before Christmas.[1] Inside the house a man was saying good-bye to his wife and his three children. He was dressed as an Arab, with a long scarf wrapped about his head and on the top the black rope of twisted goats' hair that the Arab puts on when he becomes a man.

"Will you be long, Father?" asked his little four-year-old boy.

The father could not answer, for he was going out from Jerusalem for hundreds of miles into the sun and the thirst of the desert, to the land of the fiercest Arabs—Moslems whose religion tells them that they must kill the infidel Christians. It was difficult to tear himself from his wife and his children and go out to face death in the desert. But he had come out here to carry to the Arab the story of Jesus Christ, who Himself had died on a Cross outside this very city.

So he kissed his little boy "good-bye," wrenched himself away, climbed on top of the load on one of the pack horses and rode out through the gate into the unknown. He thought as his horses picked their way down the road from Jerusalem toward Jericho of how Jesus Christ had been put to death in this very land. Over his left shoulder he saw the slopes of the Mount of Olives; down below across the ravine on his right was the Garden of Gethsemane. In a short time he was passing through Bethany where Mary and Martha lived. Down the steep winding road amongst the rocks he went, and took a cup of cold water at the inn of the Good Samaritan.

Then with the Wilderness of Desolation stretching its tawny tumbled desert hills away to the left, he moved onward, down and down until the road came out a

[1] Thursday morning, December 13, 1900.

thousand feet below sea-level among the huts and sheep-folds of Jericho, where he slept that night.

With his face toward the dawn that came up over the hills of Moab in the distance, he was off again over the plain with the Dead Sea on his right, across the swiftly flowing Jordan, and climbing the ravines that lead into the mountains of Gilead.

That night he stayed with a Circassian family in a little house of only one room into which were crowded his two horses, a mule, two donkeys, a yoke of oxen, some sheep and goats, a crowd of cocks and hens, four small dirty children and their father and mother; and a great multitude of fleas.

The mother fried him a supper of eggs with bread, and after it he showed them something that they had never seen before. He took out of his pack a copy of the New Testament translated into Arabic.[1] He read bits out of it and talked to them about the Love of God.

Early next morning, his saddle-bag stuffed with a batch of loaves which the woman had baked first thing in the morning specially for him, he set out again.

How could a whole batch of loaves be stuffed in one saddle-bag? The loaves are flat and circular like a pancake. The dough is spread on a kind of cushion, the woman takes up the cushion with the dough on it, pushes it through the opening and slaps the dough on the inner wall of a big mud oven (out of doors) that has been heated with a fire of twigs, and in a minute or two pushes the cushion in again and the cooked bread falls on to it.

So he climbed up the mountain track till he came out on the high plain. He saw the desert in front of him—like a vast rolling ocean of glowing gold it stretched away and away for close on a thousand miles eastward to the Persian Gulf. Forder knew that only here and there in all those blazing, sandy wastes were oases where men

[1] Recall Henry Martyn and Sabat at work on this.

could build their houses round some well or little stream that soon lost itself in the sand. All the rest was desert across which man and beast must hurry or die of thirst. He must follow the camel-tracks from oasis to oasis.

What makes an oasis? A well of water—therefore drink for man and camel, and date-palms.

So turning north he pressed on[1] till on the sixth day out from Jerusalem the clouds came up with the dawn, and hail and rain, carried by a biting east wind, beat down upon him. Lifting his eyes to the horizon he saw ahead the sturdy castle and thick walls of the ancient city of Bosra.[2] Stumbling through the storm, along the narrow winding streets he met, to his disgust, a man whose dress showed that he was a Turkish Government official. He knew that the Turkish Government would be against a Christian and a foreigner going into their land.

"Who are you?" asked the official, stopping him. "Where are you from? Where are you going?"

Forder told him, and the man said, "Come with me, I will find you and your horses shelter at the Governor's house." Forder followed him into a large room in the middle of which on the floor a fire was burning.

"I must examine all your cases," said the official. "Get up. Open your boxes."

"Never," said Forder. "This is not a customs house."

"Your boxes are full of powder for arming the Arabs against the Turkish Government," replied the official.

"I will not open them," said Forder, "unless you

[1] Passing Es-Salt (Ramoth Gilead), Gerash and Edrei in Bashan.
[2] Which Mohammed visited as a boy—and as a young man. See Yarn II.

bring me written orders from the Turkish Governor in Damascus and from the British Consul."

Off went the official to consult the headman (the equivalent of the Mayor) of the city. The headman came and asked many questions. At last he said :

" Well, my orders are to turn back all Europeans and not to let any stay in these parts. However, as you seem to be almost an Arab, may God go with you and give you peace."

So Forder and the headman of the ancient city of Bosra got talking together. Forder opened his satchel and drew out an Arabic New Testament, and together they read parts of the story of the life of Jesus Christ and talked about Him till ten o'clock at night. As the headman rose to go to his own rooms Forder offered to him, and he gladly took, the copy of the New Testament in Arabic to read for himself.

Saved by the Mist.

Next morning early, Forder had his horses loaded and started off with his face to the dawn. The track now led toward the great Castle of Sulkhund, which he saw looming up on the horizon twenty-five miles away, against the dull sky. But mist came down ; wind, rain, and hail buffeted him ; the horses, to escape the hail in their faces, turned aside, and the trail was lost. Mist hid everything. Forder's compass showed that he was going south ; so he turned east again ; but he could not strike the narrow, broken, stony trail.

Suddenly smoke could be seen, and then a hamlet of thirty houses loomed up. Forder opened a door and a voice came calling, " Welcome ! " He went in and saw some Arabs crouching there out of the rain. A fire of dried manure was made : the smoke made Forder's eyes

smart and the tears run down his cheeks. He changed into another man's clothes, and hung his own up in the smoke to dry.

"Where are we?" he asked. The men told him that he was two and a half hours' ride from the castle and two hours off the track that he had left in the mist. The men came in from the other little houses to see the stranger and sip coffee. Forder again brought out an Arabic New Testament and found to his surprise that some of the men could read quite well and were very keen on his books. So they bought some of the Bibles from him. They had no money but paid him in dried figs, flour and eggs. At last they left him to curl up on the hard floor; and in spite of the cold and draughts and the many fleas he soon fell asleep.

As dawn came up he rose and started off: there (as he climbed out of the hollow in which the hamlet lay) he could see the Castle Sulkhund. He knew that the Turks did not want any foreigner to enter that land of the Arabs, and that if he were seen, he would certainly be ordered back. Yet he could not hide, for the path ran close under the castle, and on the wall strode the sentry. The plain was open; there was no way by which he could creep past. At last he came to the hill on which the castle stood. At that very moment a dense mist came down; he walked along, lost the track, and found it again. Then there came a challenge from the sentry. He could not see the sentry or the sentry him. So he called back in Arabic that he was a friend, and so passed on in the mist. At last he was out on the open ground beyond both the castle and the little town by it. Five minutes later the mist blew away; the sun shone; the castle was passed, and the open plains lay before him. The mist had saved him.

In an hour he came to a large town named Orman on the edge of the desert sandy plains ; and here he stayed for some weeks. His horses were sent back to Jerusalem. Instead of towns and villages of huts, he would now find only the tents of wandering Arabs who had to keep moving to find bits of sparse growth for their few sheep and camels. While he was at Orman he managed to make friends with many of the Arabs and with their Chief. He asked the Chief to help him on toward Kaf—an oasis town across the desert.

" Don't go," the Chief and his people said, " the Arabs there are bad : when we go we never let our rifles out of our hands."

So the old Chief told him of the dangers of the desert ; death from thirst or from the fiery Arabs of Kaf.

" I am trusting God to protect and keep me," said Forder. " I believe He will do so."

So Forder handed the Chief most of his money to take care of, and sewed up the rest into the waistband of his trousers. (It is as safe as a bank to hand your money to an Arab chief who has entertained you in his tent. If you have " eaten his salt " he will not betray or rob you. Absolute loyalty to your guest is the unwritten law that no true Arab ever breaks.)

The Caravan of Two Thousand Camels.

At last the old Chief very unwillingly called a man, told him to get a camel, load up Forder's things on it, and pass him on to the first Arab tent that he found. Two days passed before they found a group of Bedouin tents. He was allowed to sleep in a tent : but early in the morning he woke with a jump. The whole of the tent had fallen right on him ; he crawled out. He saw

the Arab women standing round; they had pulled the tent down.

"Why do you do this so early?" he asked.

"The men," they replied, "have ordered us to move to another place; they fear to give shelter to a Christian —one that is unclean and would cause trouble to come on us."

So the tribesmen with their women and flocks made off, leaving Forder, his guide, and the camel alone in the desert. That afternoon he found a tent and heard that a great caravan was expected to pass that night on the way to Kaf to get salt. Night fell; it was a full moon. Forder sat with the others in the tent doorway round the fire. A man ran up to them.

"I hear the bells of the camels," he said. Quickly Forder's goods were loaded on a camel. He jumped on top. He was led off into the open plain. Away across the desert clear in the moonlight came the dark mass of the caravan with the tinkle of innumerable bells. Arabs galloped ahead of the caravan. They drew up their horses shouting, "Who are you? What do you want?" Then came fifty horsemen with long spears in their hands, rifles slung from their shoulders, swords hanging from their belts, and revolvers stuck in their robes. They were guarding the first section made up of four hundred camels. There were four sections, each guarded by fifty warriors.

As they passed, the man with Forder shouted out the names of friends of his who—he thought—would be in the caravan. Sixteen hundred camels passed in the moonlight, but still no answer came. Then the last section began to pass. The cry went up again of the names of the men. At last an answering shout was heard. The men they sought were found. Forder's guide explained

who he was and that he wanted to go to Kaf. His baggage was swiftly shifted on to another camel, and in a few minutes he had mounted, and his camel was swinging along with two thousand others into the east.

For hour after hour the tireless camels swung on and on, tawny beasts on a tawny desert, under a silver moon that swam in a deep indigo sky in which a million stars sparkled. The moon slowly sank behind them; ahead the first flush of pink lighted the sky; but still they pushed on. At last at half-past six in the morning they stopped. Forder flung himself on the sand wrapped in his *abba* (his Arab cloak) and in a few seconds was asleep. In fifteen minutes, however, they awakened him. Already most of the camels had moved on. From dawn till noon, from noon under the blazing sun till half-past five in the afternoon, the camels moved on and on, "unhasting, unresting." As the camels were kneeling to be unloaded, a shout went up. Forder looking up saw ten robbers on horseback on a mound. Like the wind the caravan warriors galloped after them firing rapidly, and at last captured them and dragged them back to the camp.

"Start again," the command went round, and in fifteen minutes the two thousand camels swung grumbling and groaning out on the endless trail of the desert. The captured Arabs were marched in the centre. All through the night the caravan went on from moonrise to moonset and through the morning from dawn till ten o'clock—for they dared not rest while the tribe from whom they had captured the prisoners could get near them. Then they released the captives and sent them back, for on the horizon they saw the green palms of Kaf, the city that they sought.

The camels had only rested for thirty minutes in forty

hours.[1] With grunts of pleasure they dropped on their knees and were freed from their loads, and began hungrily to eat their food.

Forder leapt down and was so glad to be in Kaf that he ran into some palm gardens close by and sang "Praise God from Whom all blessings flow," jumped for joy, and then washed all the sweat and sand from himself in a hot spring of sulphur water.

Lying down on the floor of a little house to which he was shown, he slept, with his head on his saddle-bags, all day till nearly sunset.

At sunset a gun was fired. The caravan was starting on its return journey. Forder's companions on the caravan came to him.

"Come back with us," they said. "Why will you stay with these cursed people of Kaf? They will surely kill you because you are a Christian."

It was hard to stay. But no Christian white man had ever been in that land before carrying the Good News of Jesus, and Forder had come out to risk his life for that very purpose. So he stayed.

What made Forder put his life in peril and stand the heat, vermin, and hate? Why try to make friends with these wild bandits? Why care about them at all? He was a baker and might have gone on with this work. It was the love of Christ that gave him the love of all men, and, in obeying His command to "Go into all the world," he found adventure, made friends, and left with them the Good News in the New Testament.

[1] It took the caravan six days to go back.

VII

ALONE IN THE DESERT

Archibald Forder (2)
(Date of Incident, 1901)

LEADER'S AIM.
See Yarn VI.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.
Recall that Forder had got as far as Kaf in his journey into Central Arabia. But the adventure he had planned was to take him farther still into the heart of the great desert. What sort of place would be the best in which to let men have his Arabic New Testaments? Suggest an oasis-town to which many camel-tracks ran, so that many different tribes would hear of the Bibles and have the opportunity of reading in them. (The main camel-tracks should be indicated on the map used for the last Yarn.)

The Lone Trail of Friendship.

The two thousand camels swung out on the homeward trail. Forder now was alone in Kaf.

"Never," he says, "shall I forget the feeling of loneliness that came over me as I made my way back to my room. The thought that I was the only Christian in the whole district was one that I cannot well describe."

As Forder passed a group of Arabs he heard them muttering to one another, "*Nisraney* [1]—one of the cursed ones—the enemy of Allah!" He remembered that he had been warned that the Arabs of Kaf were fierce, bigoted Moslems who would slay a Christian at sight. But he put on a brave front and went to the Chief's house. There he sat down with the men on the ground

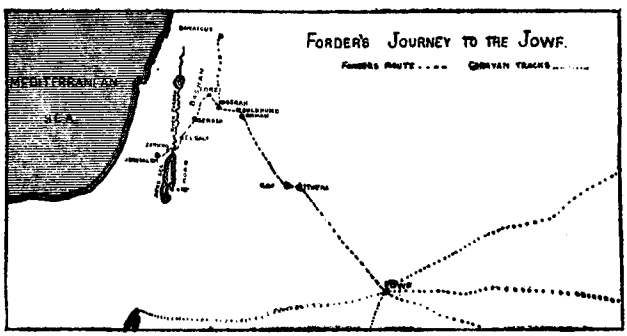
[1] That is *Nazarene* (or *Christian*).

and began to eat with them from a great iron pot a hot, slimy, greasy savoury, and then sipped coffee with them.

"Why have you come here?" they asked him.

"My desire is," he replied, "to pass on to the Jowf."

Now the Jowf is the largest town in the Syrian desert —the most important in all Northern Arabia. From there camel caravans go north, south, east, and west. Forder could see how his Arabic New Testaments would be carried from that city to all the camel tracks of Arabia.



"The Jowf is eleven days' camel ride away there," they said, pointing to the south-east.

"Go back to Orman," said the Chief, whose name was Mohammed-el-Bady, "it is at your peril that you go forward."

He sent a servant to bring in the headman of his caravan. "This *Nisraney* wishes to go with the caravan to the Jowf," said the Chief. "What do you think of it?"

"If I took a Christian to the Jowf," replied the caravan leader, "I am afraid Johar the Chief there would kill me for doing such a thing. I cannot do it."

"Yes," another said, turning to Forder, "if you ever

want to see the Jowf you must turn Moslem, as no Christian would be allowed to live there many days."

"Well," said the Chief, closing the discussion, "I will see more about this to-morrow."

At this point where the difficulties and dangers are clearly before Forder and he can still go back if he wishes, the boys could be asked what they would do under the circumstances. Obviously only a very strong motive and a very real bit of work would make a man face such dangers and hardships. What was Forder's motive? Like Paul, he loved God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and believed that in Christ alone was the power to save the Arab people; like Henry Martyn, he believed that the New Testament carried in the saddle-bags of the Arab, could go where no man could go and speak to men and change their lives. Recall how this actually happened to the Arabs Sabat and Abdallah. The narration of the Yarn could be continued by suggesting that the natural course for a man in Forder's perilous position was to keep quiet about his Christianity. What did he actually do?

As the men sat smoking round the fire Forder pulled a book out from his pouch. They watched him curiously.

"Can any of you read?" he asked. There were a number who could; so Forder opened the book—which was an Arabic New Testament—at St John's Gospel, Chapter III.

"Will you read?" he asked.

So the Arab read in his own language these words:

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Then Forder talked to them telling what the words meant. They listened very closely and asked many questions. It was all quite new to them.

"Will you give me the book?" asked the Arab who was reading. Forder knew that he would only value it if he bought it, so he sold it to him for some dates, and eight or nine men bought copies from him.

Forder tells us that the Arab read John iii. to him. If there is time, one boy might be the reading Arab and the others might say which verse

Forder would be likely to talk about, and why: *e.g.*, the Arabs would understand at once why Nicodemus should come in secret by night to Jesus—the *Nisraney* or Nazarene heretic teacher.

Next day the Chief tried to get other passing Arabs to conduct Forder to the Jowf, but none would take the risk. So at last he lent him two of his own servants to lead him to Ithera—an oasis four hours' camel ride across the desert. So away they went across the desert and in the late afternoon saw the palms of Ithera.

"We have brought you a Christian," shouted the servants as they led Forder into a room full of men, and dumped his goods down on the floor. "We stick him on to you; do what you can with him."

"This is neither a Christian, nor a Jew, nor an infidel," shouted one of the men, "but a pig." He did not know that Forder understood Arabic.

"Men," he replied boldly, "I am neither pig, infidel, nor Jew. I am a Christian, one that worships God, the same God as you do."

"If you are a Christian," exclaimed the old Chief, "go and sit among the cattle!" So Forder went to the further end of the room and sat between an old white mare and a camel.

Soon a man came in, and walking over to Forder put his hand out and shook his. He sat down by him and, talking very quietly so that the others should not hear, said: "Who are you, and from where do you come?"

"From Jerusalem," said Forder. "I am a Christian preacher."

"If you value your life," went on the stranger, "you will get out of this as quickly as you can, or the men, who are a bad lot, will kill you. I am a Druze [1] but I pretend to be a Moslem."

[1] The Druzes are a separate nation and sect whose religion is a kind of Islam mixed with relics of old Eastern faiths, *e.g.* sun-worship.

"What sort of a man is the Chief of Ithera?" asked Forder.

"Very kind," was the reply. So the friendly stranger went out. Forder listened carefully to the talk.

"Let us cut his throat while he is asleep," said one man. "No," said the Chief. "I will not have the blood of a Christian on my house and town."

"Let us poison his supper," said another. But the Chief would not agree.

"Drive him out into the desert to die of hunger and thirst," suggested a third. "No," said the Chief, whose name was Khy-Khevan, "we will leave him till the morning." Forder was then called to share supper with the others, and afterwards the Chief led him out to the palm gardens, so that his evil influence should not make the beasts ill; half an hour later, fearing he would spoil the date-harvest by his presence, the Chief led him to a filthy tent where an old man lay with a disease so horrible that they had thrust him out of the village to die.

The next day Forder found that later in the week the old Chief himself was going to the Jowf. Ripping open the waistband of his trousers, Forder took out four French Napoleons (gold coins worth 16s. each) and went off to the Chief, whom he found alone in his guest room.

Walking up to him Forder held out the money saying, "If you will let me go to the Jowf with you, find me camel, water and food, I will give you these four pieces."

"Give them to me now," said Khy-Khevan, "and we will start after to-morrow."

"No," replied Forder, "you come outside, and before the men of the place I will give them to you; they must be witnesses." So in the presence of the men the bargain was made.

In the morning the camels were got together—about

a hundred and twenty of them—with eighty men, some of whom came round Forder, and patting their daggers and guns said, "These things are for using on Christians. We shall leave your dead body in the sand if you do not change your religion and be a follower of Mohammed."

After these cheerful encouragements the caravan started at one o'clock. For four hours they travelled. Then a shout went up—"Look behind!" Looking round Forder saw a wild troop of Bedouin robbers galloping after them as hard as they could ride. The camels were rushed together in a group: the men of Ithera fired on the robbers and went after them. After a short, sharp battle the robbers made off and the men settled down where they were for the night, during which they had to beat off another attack by the robbers. Forder said, "What brave fellows you are!" This praise pleased them immensely, and they began to be friendly with him, and forgot that they had meant to leave his dead body in the desert, though they still told him he would be killed at the Jowf. For three days they travelled on without finding any water, and even on the fourth day they only found it by digging up the sand with their fingers till they had made a hole over six feet deep where they found some.

In the Heart of the Desert.

At last Forder saw the great mass of the old castle, "no one knows how old," that guards the Jowf,[1] that great isolated city with its thousands of lovely green date palms in the heart of the tremendous ocean of desert.

Men, women and children came pouring out to meet

[1] The Jowf is a large oasis town with about 40,000 inhabitants, about 250 miles from the edge of the desert. The water supply is drawn up by camels from deep down in the earth.

their friends: for a desert city is like a port to which the wilderness is the ocean, and the caravan of camels is the ship, and the friends go down as we do to the pier to meet our friends from across the sea.

"May Allah curse him!" they cried, scowling, when they heard that a Christian stranger was in the caravan. "The enemy of Allah and the Prophet! Unclean! Infidel!"

Johar, the great Chief of the Jowf, commanded that Forder should be brought into his presence, and proceeded to question him:

"Did you come over here alone?" "Yes," he answered.

"Were you not afraid?" "No," he replied.

"Have you no fear of anyone?" "Yes, I fear God and the devil."

"Do you not fear me?" "No."

"But I could cut your head off."

"Yes," answered Forder, "I know you could. But you wouldn't treat a guest thus."

"You must become a follower of Mohammed," said Johar, "for we are taught to kill Christians. Say to me, 'There is no God but God and Mohammed is His prophet' and I will give you wives and camels and a house and palms." Everybody sat listening for the answer. Forder paused and prayed in silence for a few seconds, for he knew that on his answer life or death would depend.

"Chief Johar," said Forder, "if you were in the land of the Christians, the guest of the monarch, and if the ruler asked you to become a Christian and give up your religion, would you do it?"

"No," said Johar proudly, "not if the ruler had my head cut off."

"Secondly," he said to Johar, "which do you think it best to do, to please God or to please man?"

"To please God," said the Chief.

"Johar," said Forder, "I am just like you; I cannot change my religion, not if you cut off two heads; and I must please God by remaining a Christian. . . . I cannot do what you ask me. It is impossible." Johar rose up and went out much displeased.

"Kill the Christian!"

One day soon after this there was fierce anger because the mud tower in which Johar was sitting fell in, and Johar was covered with the debris. "This is the Christian's doing," someone cried. "He looked at the tower and bewitched it, so it has fallen." At once the cry was raised, "Kill the Christian—kill him—kill him! The Christian! The Christian!"

An angry mob dashed toward Forder with clubs, daggers and revolvers. He stood still awaiting them. They were within eighty yards when, to his own amazement, three men came from behind him, and standing in front of Forder between him and his assailants pulled out their revolvers and shouted, "Not one of you come near this Christian!" The murderous crowd halted. Forder slowly walked backward toward his room, his defenders doing the same, and the crowd melted away.

He then turned to his three defenders and said, "What made you come to defend me as you did?"

"We have been to India," they answered, "and we have seen the Christians there, and we know that they do no harm to any man. We have also seen the effect of the rule of you English in that land and in Egypt, and we will always help Christians when we can. We wish

the English would come here; Christians are better than Moslems."

Other adventures came to Forder in the Jowf, and he read the New Testament with some of the men who bought the books from him to read. At last Khy-Khevan, the Chief of Ithera, who had brought Forder to the Jowf, said that he must go back, and Forder, who had now learned what he wished about the Jowf, and had put the books of the Gospels into the hands of the men, decided to return to his wife and boys in Jerusalem to prepare to bring them over to live with him in that land of the Arabs. So he said farewell to the Chief Johar, and rode away on a camel with Khy-Khevan. Many things he suffered—from fever and hunger, from heat and thirst, and vermin. But at last he reached Jerusalem once more; and his little four-year-old boy clapped hands with joy as he saw his father come back after those long months of peril and hardship.

Fifteen hundred miles he had ridden on horse and camel, or walked. Two hundred and fifty Arabic Gospels and Psalms had been sold to people who had never seen them before. Hundreds of men and women had heard him tell them of the love of Jesus. And friends had been made among Arabs all over those desert tracks, to whom he could go back again in the days that were to come.

[The Arabs of the Syrian Desert all think of Forder as a friend to-day. He was during the war imprisoned by the Turks, who falsely swore he was a British spy. The Arab chiefs were very anxious about him, and were always asking British officers whom they met whether he was still alive. He was in London at the time when these Yarns were written, and looking forward to going back to his work.]

Printed in Great Britain
by Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh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