ZIGZAG JOURNEYS IN THE CAMEL COUNTRY

By

A. E. and S. M. ZWEMER

Zigzag Journeys in the Camel Country

Arabia in Picture and Story.
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Topsy-Turvy Land

Arabia Pictured for Children.
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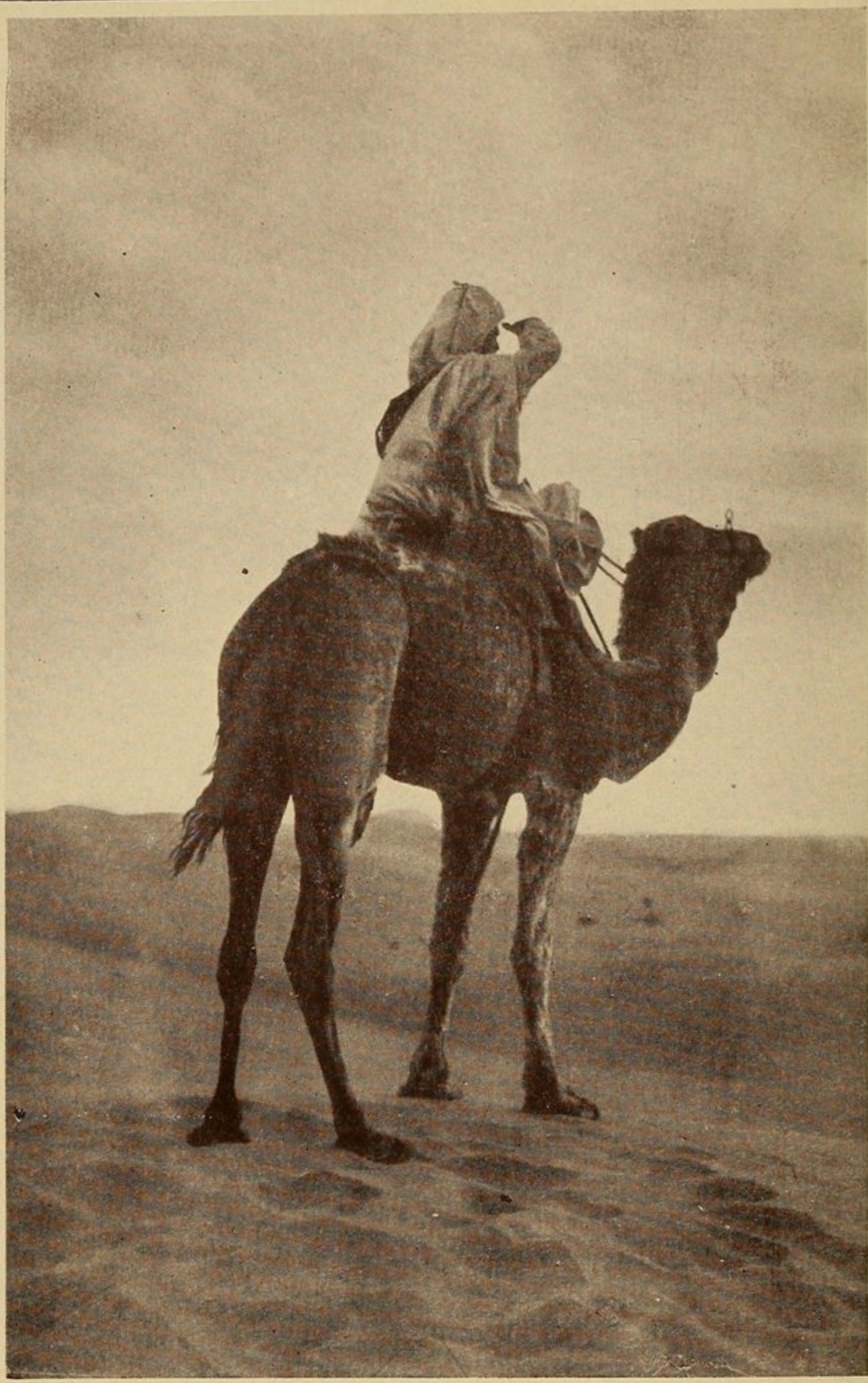
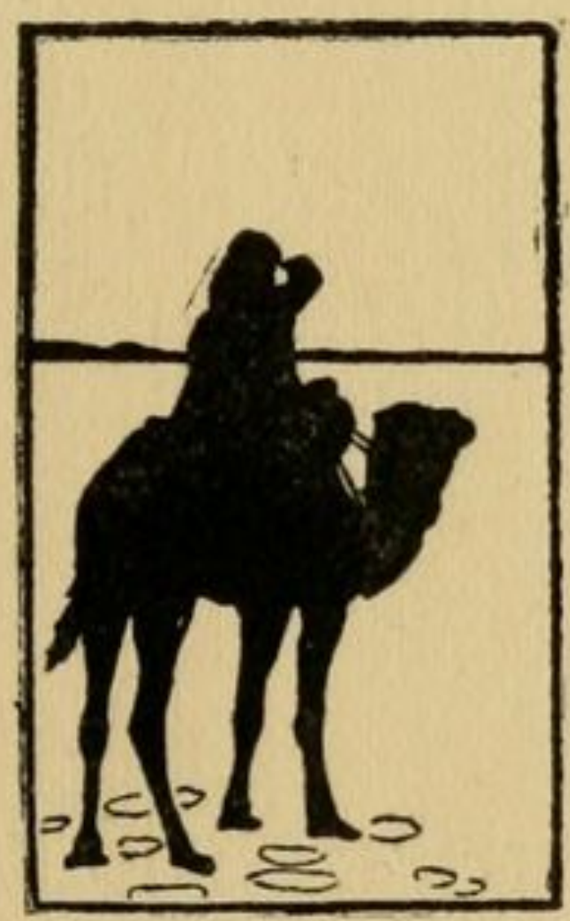


The Desert Scout

ZIGZAG JOURNEYS IN THE CAMEL COUNTRY

ARABIA IN PICTURE AND STORY

By
SAMUEL M. ZWEMER
and
AMY E. ZWEMER
Authors of "Topsy Turvy Land"



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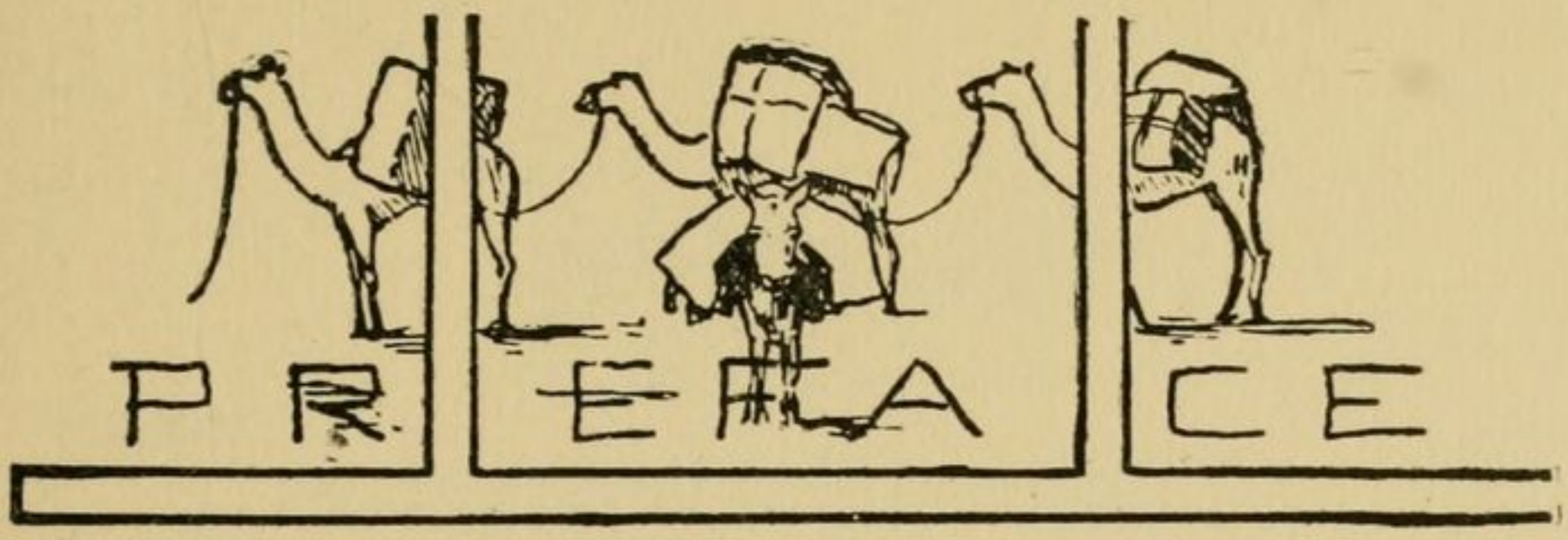
To

the children of missionaries
all the world over



HERE is another book of pictures and stories for the big children and small grown-up folks who enjoyed reading "Topsy Turvy Land" and want to know more about Arabia. A great part of this strange Camel Country is still unknown, and there are wide deserts which only the camel and his Arab guide have ever crossed. A few travellers and missionaries, however, have seen something of Arabia on their zigzag journeys along the coasts and inland. Would you like to hear the story?

The camels are waiting and the caravan is ready to start. You will not grow weary by the way, we hope. If the desert tracks are long and tiresome through the following chapters, just refresh yourself in the oasis of a picture.

S. M. Z.
A. E. Z.

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Grateful acknowledgment is given to Mr. J. M. Coutinho, photographer at Aden, for permission to use several full-paged photographs. And gratitude is also expressed here for the use of other pictures taken by our missionary friends, the Rev. J. C. Young, M. D., and Dr. Sharon J. Thoms.

I

ZIGZAG JOURNEYS IN ARABIA

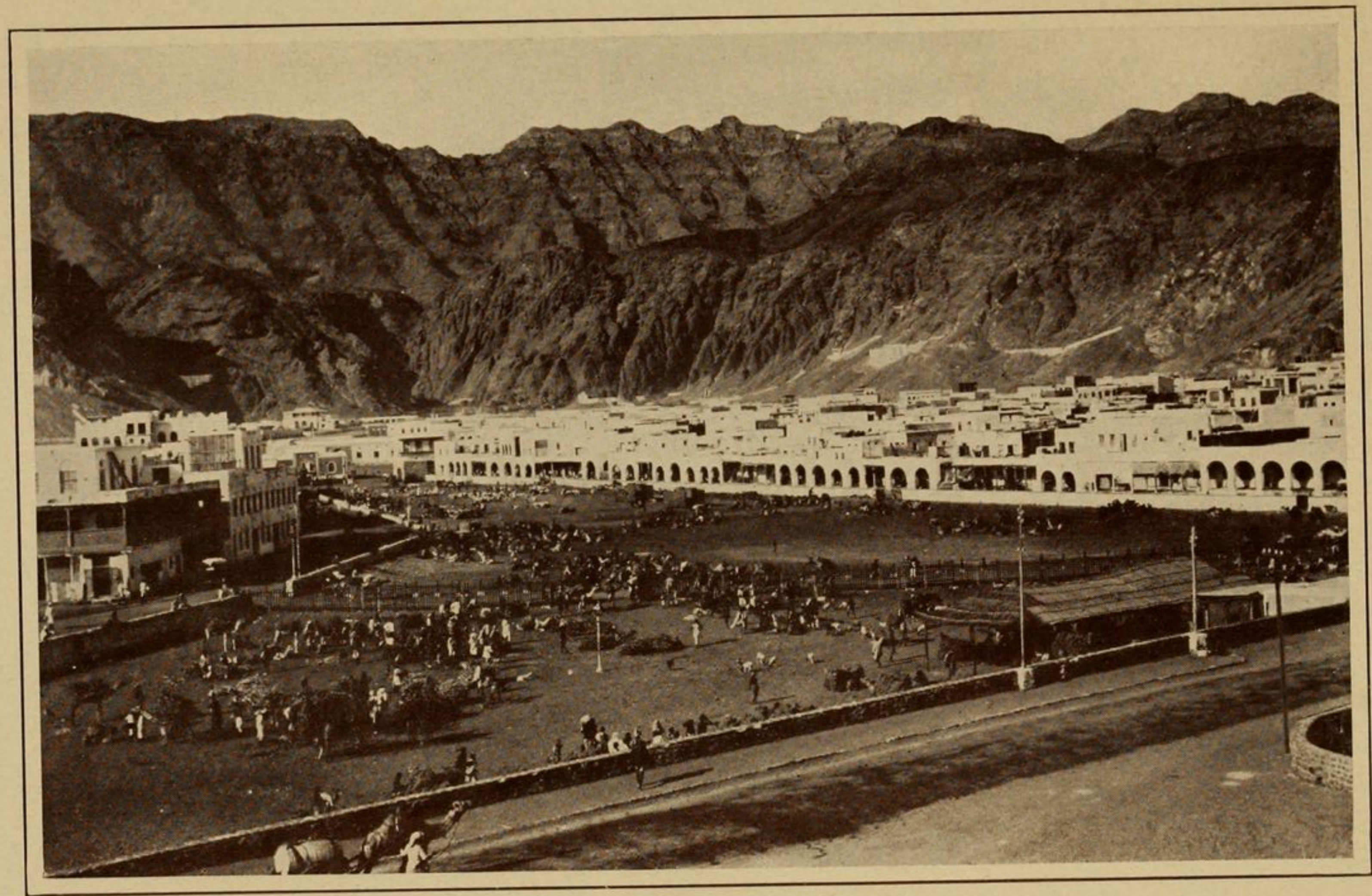
ZIGZAG are the lines across the deserts of Arabia that mark the weary journeys of the camel caravans for centuries. Arabia has no straight roads. The crooked, winding paths through valley and along mountainside or over sandy tracks are worn smooth by the shuffling feet of the animal-with-the-long-neck. Every bit of desert thorn or green herb on either side of the path means a step away from the straight line. The caravan zigzags towards its destination. The ship of the desert makes more tacks in its onward course than a sailing-boat with a contrary wind in a narrow harbour.

The Arab, like the camel, is not in love with straight lines. An Arab carpenter cannot draw a right angle, and the Arab mason seldom uses a plummet. An Arab servant has great trouble in laying a table-cloth square on the table. The old Arab temple at Mecca is called "a Cube" (Kaaba), and yet has none of its sides and angles equal but is a zigzag building. Streets are never parallel or at right angles, but go crisscross in all sorts of ways except the shortest way.

And so it came to pass that when the tribes of men after the deluge scattered from the Tower of Babel far to the south of the big Arabian peninsula they too travelled in zigzag lines. Some went to the far east on the Persian

Gulf and began to be pearl-divers at Bahrein. Others took their best camels all the way across the waterless desert of the interior and settled in Oman to become the breeders of the finest dromedaries. Others went meandering southward along the river-beds, called *wadies*, till they came to the beautiful mountains of Yemen, green with trees and bright with blossoms. Others loved the dry, clear, keen air of the high plateau, and making tents of goat-hair they lived with their flocks, and are the Bedouin tribes of to-day. Still others were driven to the west and, because the country was barren and dreadfully hot, settled near a spring called Zem Zem, and built the city of Mecca. The waters of the spring were good, they said, for fever and pain, and so Mecca became a health resort and a market-place, and finally a religious centre. Every year the distant tribes came in great caravans to visit the city and exchange mares, camel-foals and bits of poetry.

The children of Ishmael and other grandchildren of "Father Abraham" also wandered down, and before the time of David the zigzag lines of the caravans that carried costly merchandise from Persia and India were all over Arabia. The single-track roads were as thick as the wrinkles on an old man's forehead. But the great trunk lines were three: one of them extended from Aden on the far south, which was the chief harbour, along the whole western stretch of Arabia to Egypt. This was the road which the Queen of Sheba took when she came to see



The big Camel Market in the crater at Aden where we preached our first sermon in 1891

Solomon in all his glory. The other road extended from Babylon across the desert to Damascus, the oldest city in the world; and the third caravan route, nearly as important as the other two, went slant-wise from the mouth of the Euphrates River to the old capital of the Queen of Sheba, Marib. These three great railroads of the desert were busy day after day and month after month and year after year for many centuries. Great cities sprang up beside these camel tracks, and the ruins of Tadmor still show the wonderful importance of old time Arabia.

But for one reason and another trade chose other channels, and Arabia lost its importance. When the Wise Men came from the East to Bethlehem's Manger the trunk lines were still in existence, but soon after Mohammed's birth other parts of the world became more important, and Arabia became less and less known except to those who live in its deserts.

It had to be rediscovered in the present century, and the story of the rediscovery of Arabia is full of interest. This story, also, is a story of zigzag journeys.

Some bold travellers in Europe were anxious to visit the birthplace of Mohammed and see the holy city of Mecca, and at the risk of their lives, men like Burckhardt, Burton and others reached Mecca and Medina, travelling with the Arab caravans and dressed as Moslem pilgrims. In 1862 Palgrave made his celebrated journey across Arabia from west to east. And in 1876 Doughty, one of the bravest travellers, made his long and difficult

zigzag journeys through Northwest and North Arabia, often in danger of his life. Suffering hunger and thirst with the Bedouins, he was driven from place to place until he finally got out of the interior safely.

Even earlier than these well-known travellers were the journeys of Cursten Niebuhr in Yemen. In 1763 he was sent by the King of Denmark to explore the unknown peninsula, and set out with five companions. After many wonderful adventures he came back, but he was the only one of the five: the others died in Arabia through fever or on the voyage.

Except for the portion of Arabia seen by those bold travellers and by others like them, a great part of the country is still unknown. No missionaries have ever crossed Arabia although they have made journeys into the interior and along the coasts. It is surprising, but it is true that the most unknown country in the world to-day is Arabia. We have better maps of the North Polar regions and even of the moon than we have of Southeast Arabia and portions of the interior.

The barren desert, fear of the Bedouin, always ready to rob and waylay the caravan, and the hatred of the Moslem for the Christian have closed the country for many years against travellers and missionaries; but, although so long neglected, Arabia is now becoming better known. The coasts have been explored, and they are actually building a railway to-day across the desert from Damascus to Mecca and another railway along the northern borders to

IN THE CAMEL COUNTRY

A R A B I A

Bagdad. A few months ago a British traveller crossed Arabia in a motor car. How the camels must have been surprised!

In the chapters that follow, we will take some zigzag journeys together,—sometimes on camels, sometimes on donkey-back, or in the Arab sailing-boats along the coast. We will not tell you what others have seen or heard in this wonderful country of the camel, but tell our own story; and we hope that you will learn to love the Arab, his country, and his camel as much as we do, and make many a new zigzag track across the map of Arabia to mark your journeys as future missionaries.

II

THE CAMEL AT HOME

Mr. and Mrs. Camel

At Home *All Over Arabia.*

B. C. 4000–A. D. 1911.

PERSIA for goats, Egypt for crocodiles, Cashmere for sheep, Thibet for bulldogs, India for tigers, but Arabia for the camel! To see real live dromedaries, you must come to Arabia. For although the camel is often met with elsewhere, no country can show him in all his beauty like that country which is called by the Arabs themselves "Um-el-Ibl," mother of the camel. The Oman dromedary is the prince of all camel breeds, and is so highly esteemed in the markets of the East as to fetch three times the price of any other camel. And no wonder that this animal has reached perfection in Arabia! He has been at home in its deserts and trained by its tribes for many, many centuries. Arabia and the camel are so closely connected that one can neither understand the Arab nor his language without him. Without the camel, life in a large part of Arabia would at present

be impossible. Without the camel, the Arabic language itself would lose a vast number of words and ideas and possibly also a great many of its difficult sounds. There is not a page in the Arabic dictionary which does not have some reference to the camel and the life of this wonderful ship of the desert. The Arabs give him five thousand, seven hundred and forty-four different names, but the most common name by which he is known, not only by the Arabs but in all languages, is that of "Jemil," that is to say, "camel."

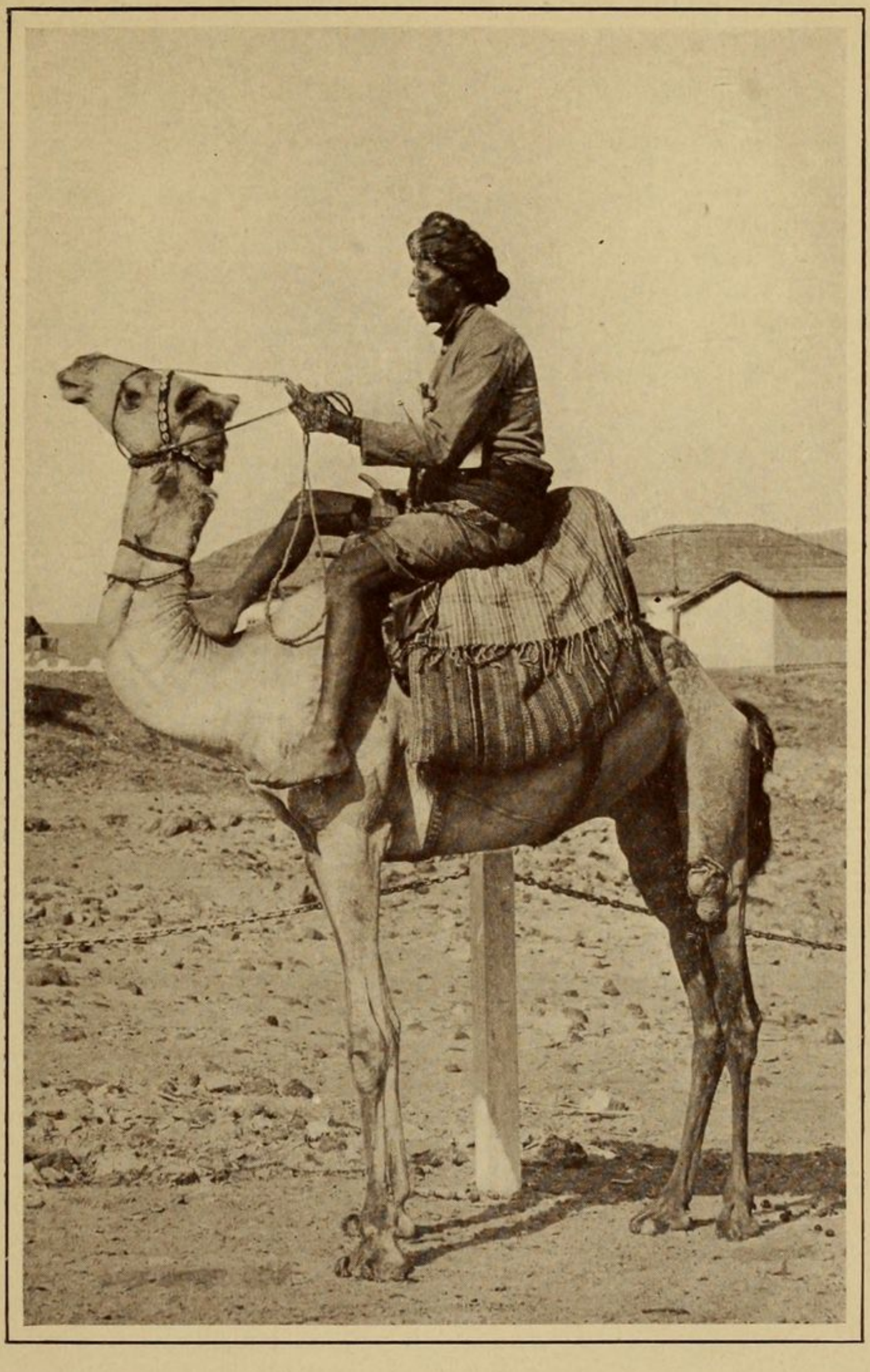
When the Ishmaelites brought Joseph to Egypt, and when the Queen of Sheba came to visit Solomon, they travelled on camels. The caravan was the earliest trunk line across the great lands of the East, and has probably carried more freight and more passengers than the Pennsylvania Railroad or the largest ocean liners. Long before wagons were invented, wheat, barley, wool and spices came across the desert on camels to Nineveh and Egypt.

Have you ever seen such a desert ship? A large, bony animal, six or seven feet high to the top of its hump, and rude and ungainly in appearance. Its neck is long, but curved beautifully. Its ears are ridiculously small, and the upper lip is cleft nearly to the nose, while the lower lip hangs down, and gives the whole face the appearance of "having the blues."

The camel has many uses. When too old to carry a burden, it is used for food. Camel's milk is very whole-

some. Camel's hair is used for making both fine and coarse cloths, and the skin is used for sandals, water-bags and thongs.

The dromedary is the swift post-camel, which carries its rider on long journeys seventy miles a day on the stretch. A caravan of ordinary camels is like a freight train and is intended to go slowly and surely with its heavy load of merchandise ; but a company of dromedary riders is like a limited express. The ordinary caravan travels six hours a day and about three miles an hour, but a good dromedary can perform wonders on the road. A merchant once rode the entire distance from El Kasim to Taif and back, over seven hundred miles in fifteen days ; and a post-rider at Maan in North Arabia can deliver a message at Damascus, two hundred miles away, at the end of three days. The ordinary camel is like a packhorse, but the dromedary by careful breeding has become a race-horse. The camel is thick-built, heavy footed, ungainly, jolting. The dromedary has more slender limbs, finer hair, a lighter step, a wonderfully easy pace and is more enduring of thirst. All the camels in Arabia have a single hump. The two-humped camel, which you sometimes see in the circus, does not come from Arabia, but from Central Asia. As for the ordinary camel, his life is as hard as the desert soil and as barren of all comfort as the desert is bare of grass. Surely, no animal would have more right to feel sulky and dull. Always in hard use as a beast of burden, underfed and

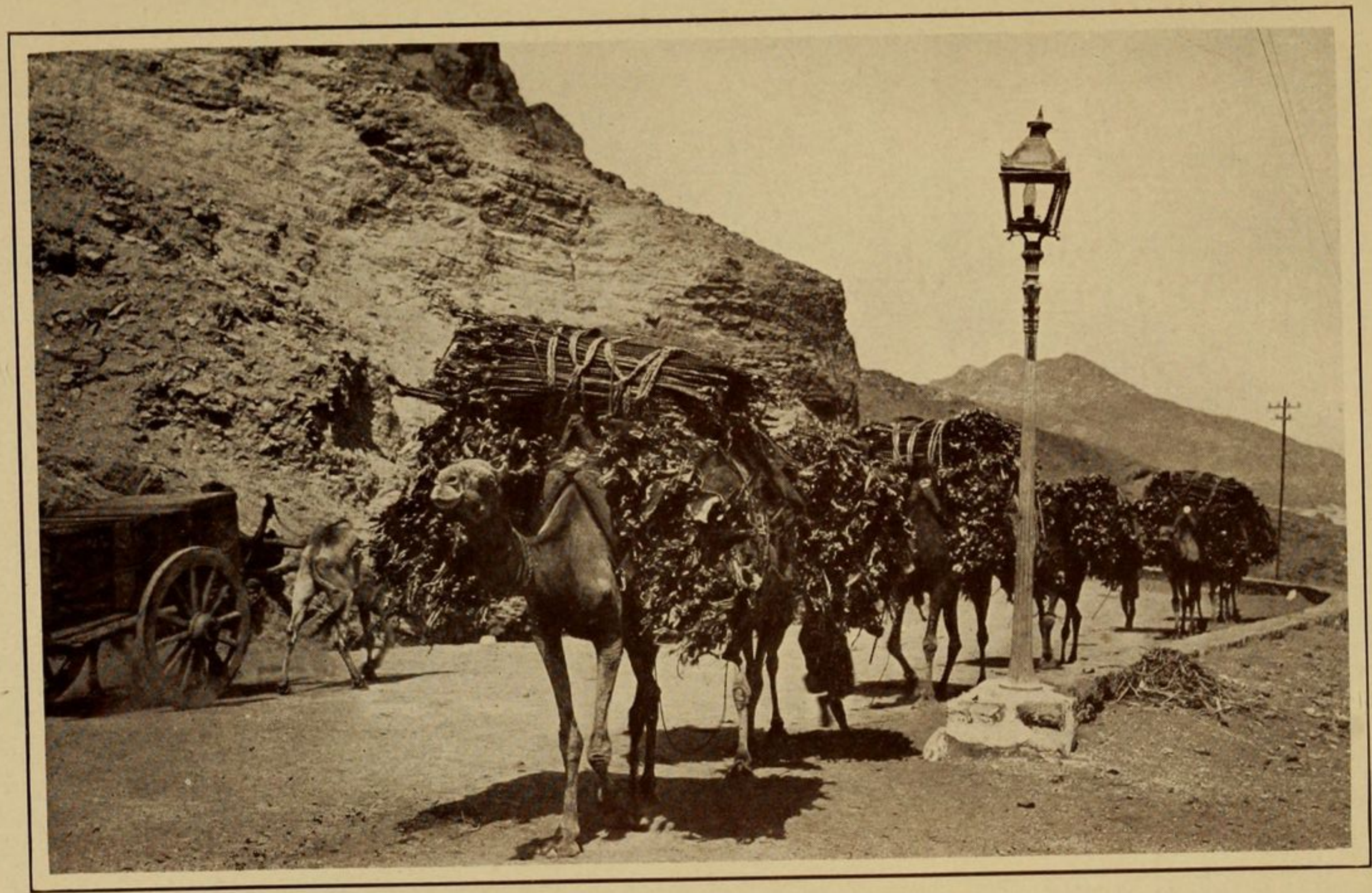


A Swift Dromedary and an Arab Post-rider

overloaded in the desert land where even a thorny bush is considered a tit-bit, and where water costs money, it is no fun at all to be a camel.

Yet to describe the camel is to describe God's goodness to the desert dwellers. The Arabs have a saying that the camel is the greatest of all blessings given by Allah to mankind; and when Mohammed, the prophet, wished to call attention to the providence and loving-kindness of God among the Bedouins, who were not at all religious, he said, "And will ye not look then at the camel how she is created?" With his long neck he is able to reach far out among the desert shrubs on both sides of his pathway and to eat as he trudges along. The skin of his mouth is so thick and tough that it enables him to eat hard and thorny plants, the only herbage of the desert. The camel's ears are very small so that he can close them when the desert storm begins and the sand-drifts come like a snow-storm. But his nostrils are large for breathing and yet can be closed up tight during the fearful simoom or hot desert winds. His eyes are protected by heavy, overhanging lids against the direct rays of the noon sun, and his cushioned feet are adapted for the ease of the rider and of the animal himself. Five horny pads, one on each knee, and one under the breast, support the animal when kneeling to receive a burden or when he rests on the hot sand. The camel's hump was nature's pack-saddle for the commerce of many lands and for many ages. The arched backbone which supports the

hump is constructed, just like the Brooklyn Bridge, to sustain the greatest weight in proportion to the span. A strong camel can bear one thousand pounds' weight, although the usual load is not more than six hundred pounds. The camel is the most useful of all domestic animals, as you can see in the pictures. He can carry burdens or draw water or carry the swift post or bring in fire-wood from the desert, or grind corn. While still living he provides fuel, milk, excellent hair for making tents, ropes, and shawls. And when dead the Arabs eat his flesh for food, use his leather to make sandals, and the big broad shoulder-blades are used as slates in the day-schools in many parts of Arabia. A camel march is the standard of distance among the Arabs, and the price of a milch camel is the standard of value among the Bedouins of the desert. The camel is the most patient animal in existence, and yet he often has an ugly temper and is undoubtedly stupid to a degree. He will never attempt to throw you off his back, but if you fall off he will never dream of stopping for you; and if turned loose in the desert, it is a chance of a thousand to one whether he will find his way back to his accustomed home or pasture. When the camel becomes angry, he bends back his long, snaky neck and opens his big jaws to bite. Do you notice the powerful jaws of the camels in the pictures? Yet with all his faults, his ungainly gait, and his ugly appearance, you cannot help loving this ship of the desert when once you have made a zigzag



A caravan from Yemen bringing in hides for American kid shoes

journey on camel-back with the Arab caravans. Perched high in the air you feel as if you were riding on a church steeple or an aeroplane and the swinging, swaying motion after you become used to it is as good as that of a pleasure yacht in New York Bay when the wind is blowing. Then you feel like singing with the Arab poet:

> "Roast meat and milk; the swinging ride
> On a camel sure and tried,
> Which her master speeds amain
> O'er low dale and level plain."

There are two lessons we can learn from the camel, and I think all the boys and girls who read this chapter will like to know them. The first is, *how to bear a burden* and never complain. The secret of carrying this burden you will see when the caravan prepares for the long journey. Every camel kneels down to receive its load in the morning; every camel kneels down to have its load taken off in the evening. And that is why he is able to carry his burden to the end of the desert road. How much easier the great burden of a lost world in need of the Gospel could be carried, if we all learned to kneel morning and evening! To kneel and have the Master's hand lay the burden on us, and the same hand take it off. Then we would feel the responsibility, and yet not miss the quietness and rest of real missionary service. Will you not kneel to-night, and to-morrow, and ask Jesus to teach you this lesson? Because, you know, the burden of these

heathen lands is *very* heavy. There is on all of them, on Arabia too, the burden of sin, and of suffering, and of sorrow. What an awful burden! And yet the Bible tells us, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

The second lesson is that of *patience*, which is the chief virtue of the camel, the most necessary virtue for every little missionary, and absolutely necessary for every big missionary. As the long train of camels goes on through the narrow sand path and between the thorn-shrubs of the wilderness, step by step, without sound and without ceasing, tramp, tramp, tramp, I have often thought of the text: "They shall walk and not faint." Patient walking is better than impatient hurrying, in mission work and everything else. Patient waiting, too, you can learn from the camel. To wait patiently for results and not to dig up the seed we have sown before it sprouts. The Great Husbandman has long patience over every seed that He sows; why should not we?

> "Let us, then, be up and doing,
> With a heart for any fate,
> Still achieving, still pursuing,
> Learn to labour and to wait."

III

ALONG UNBEATEN TRACKS IN YEMEN

THOSE who think Arabia is a sandy desert with a few nomad tents and camels and ostriches scattered over it, have never seen Yemen. Yemen is the most fertile and most beautiful of all the provinces of Arabia. It means *the right hand*, and this name was given it as one of good omen by the early Arabs. It was called by the Romans *Arabia Felix*, or Happy Arabia, to distinguish it from *Arabia Petrea* (Stony Arabia) and *Arabia Deserta* (Desert Arabia).

Those who have never gone inland from Aden cannot imagine how very different the hill country is from the torrid coast, but a journey of even thirty miles inland is convincing. Corn never grew more luxuriantly in Kansas or Iowa than in some of the valleys of Yemen. If the country had a good government and the people were Christians, it would be one of the happiest in the world ; a country where the orange, lemon, quince, grape, mango, plum, apricot, peach and apple yield their fruit in their season ; where you can also get pomegranates, figs, dates, plantains and mulberries ; a country where wheat, barley and coffee are staple products, and where there is a glorious profusion of wild flowers—although the camel drivers call it grass. Here one can see the nest of the oriole hanging from the acacia tree, and wild doves chasing each other

from the clefts of the rocks, while farther up in the highlands, wild monkeys sport among the foliage of the trees.

It was my privilege to make two journeys through Yemen to its beautiful capital, Sanaa. On my first journey (1891) I went by the usual road from Hodeida on the coast, but in 1893 I chose the unbeaten tracks from Aden directly north, in order to see some of the places not yet visited and meet the people.

At the time of my first and also of my second journey, the Arabs were in rebellion against the Turks. They have been fighting them now for fifteen years, trying to secure their independence, and this year the country is more disturbed than ever, but the Arabs have no unity, no leadership, and, worst of all, no artillery, and so the Turkish government succeeds in crushing the rebellion time after time, and holding this province of Arabia in her grasp.

It was five o'clock on Monday morning, July 2d, that I set off from Aden with my camel boy Salih, and we did not stop until we reached the village of Wahat, nearly at noon. Starting again at seven o'clock, we followed the Arab custom of marching the whole night with the caravan. There was no breeze, and it was very hot. Vegetation does not begin until you enter Wady Merga. Here we had fresh dates, and made our camp under a big acacia tree. The road begins to rise rapidly as we follow the Wady northwards, and at midnight we pass Suk-el-Juma, or Friday market. This part of the road, they tell us, is

dangerous, and so the Bedouins who accompany our eighty-two camel caravan swing the lighted wicks which they use to fire their flint-lock shotguns. Only one man in the party had a Springfield rifle. On July 4th we fell in with some Arabs who wanted to seize me as a spy of the British government and keep me as a prisoner until money was paid for my release. After some difficulty we persuaded them that I was not a British subject, and that no money would be paid even if they kept me a prisoner for many days.

The following day we had another adventure. Climbing up the valley and past fields of verdure, where men were plowing and women were weeding the gardens, we suddenly stumbled upon a Turkish castle, where an unmannerly negro official was in charge. He said no strangers were allowed beyond the Turkish frontier, seized all my baggage, confiscated my books and maps, and sent me under guard to Taiz, the next important town. On the afternoon of the same day, a heavy thunderstorm burst upon us from a clear sky, the wind became a hurricane, some of the camels stampeded, our umbrellas turned inside out, and, worst of all, a mountain torrent, swollen by the sudden rains and hail, carried away a donkey and part of our baggage. Drenched to the skin, we at last forced the camels up the slope to the house of an Arab, and were hospitably entertained, around a big fire which he built, on Arab coffee and sweetmeats.

We were now three thousand feet above sea level, and

it was very cold at night even in July. We pressed on the next day, travelling through a country where every one fears his neighbour. I asked my guide why he had not prayed since we left Wahat, and his answer was, "If I pray on the road, my heart gets soft, and I fear to shoot an Arab robber because he may be a Moslem." We saw many centipedes and scorpions sleeping after their rain bath, and warming themselves on the rocks. Every turn of the road brought us in sight of new villages, and everywhere the peasants have done their best to cultivate the soil by irrigation, until you can count a dozen terraces one above the other up the mountainside, in various shades of green of the different crops. Once and again we met caravans going down to the coast, carrying coffee or sheep-hides, as you see in the picture. One could hear the approach of a caravan by the camel drivers' song. In a high, monotonous key and with endless repetition, they would sing verses like this about their camels:

> "O Lord, keep them from all dangers that pass,
> And make their long legs pillars of brass."

Two days later we arrived at the interesting old town of Taiz, and I think I was the first Western traveller to visit it since the days of Niebuhr in 1763. While waiting for the governor to investigate the seizure of my baggage and the question of my passport, I had a good opportunity to study the town. Taiz has a population

of about seven thousand people; two or three very old mosques with minarets, a Jewish synagogue, and a very respectable market. Just back of the town rises a mountain called the Bride's Castle, from the top of which you can see clear across to the African coast. The Turkish government takes its own time about such a little matter as the inspection of baggage and the granting of a passport, and it was July 26th before I left Taiz. Even then I was not released, but sent on from the local governor to the capital under guard of a mounted trooper, who rode a beautiful horse, while I followed on a mule. It was no hardship, however, to get away from Taiz, and once more to breathe the country air and climb the mountain passes.

A long day's journey, always climbing up the mountain-side, brought us to Ibb, where my servant was imprisoned because he had told me the names of the villages. After some difficulty he was released, but the incident shows how suspicious the Turks are of strangers who travel in their country. Twelve hours farther on we came to Yerim, an unhealthy town situated near a marsh. It was July 29th, but the high elevation and the rain-storms brought the temperature down to fifty-two degrees, which was a great change from the temperature at Aden which, when I left, was 105 degrees in the shade. At another village, Maaber, even at noon the temperature was not over fifty-six degrees, and we wrapped ourselves up as though we were on a polar expedition. In these

highlands of Yemen snow falls during the winter season, and frost is common. Just after leaving Yerim, we passed a large boulder on the road with an impression in it as though it were of some one's foot. The Arabs say it is that of Ali, the grandson of Mohammed, who came along this road, and whenever they pass it they anoint it with oil and stop to pray.

From Yerim on to Sanaa the plateau is more level. Wide fields of barley and wheat took the place of coffee plantations, and the funniest sight we saw was camels hitched up for plowing. What with their long necks and queer harness, so much too big for the job, it was an odd sight. Damar, a large town with three mosques and houses built of stone, was our next stopping place. From Damar to Waalan was thirty-five miles, and then to Sanaa eighteen miles more. The roads here are splendid and are kept in good repair for the sake of the Turkish artillery, although there are no carriages nor horses in use.

On Thursday, August 2d, I entered Sanaa by the Yemen gate. Three years before I entered the same city from the other side, coming from Hodeida. Handed over to the care of a policeman, I waited for the governor to hear my case, and after finding an old Greek friend who knew me in Aden, and offered to go bail, I was allowed liberty, and for nineteen days was busy seeing the city and visiting the Arabs. We shall hear more of Sanaa in a following chapter. I forgot to say that at

Yerim, while sleeping in the coffee shop, I was robbed of all my money, and so I ended my zigzag journey not only tired out, but a pauper; and if I had not pawned my watch and coat, I would have been in debt to the hotel keeper. Pioneer journeys in Topsy Turvy Land are not without difficulty.

IV

GOING TO MARKET TO SOW SEED

THE Arabs are a very old-fashioned people. In fact, their customs have not changed since the time that Ishmael as a boy went with his mother Hagar on the camels and landed somewhere in Arabia. I suppose that even in those old times the Arabs and the Syrians kept a weekly market where all the people from all the villages came together to barter their wares, to shake hands and make acquaintance and go back with a larger idea of their small world. The custom of holding weekly markets on a special day of the week even in the smallest villages is still common in Arabia. In fact, there are villages that take their name from a market day, and are called "Thursday" or "Saturday" because on those days of the week the village takes on an air of importance and doubles in population. The Arabs, however, do not have the same names for the days of the week that we have. Instead of naming them after idols, Thursday after Thor and Wednesday after the old god Woden, they number the days of the week just as in the first chapter of Genesis, and have "The First Day," "The Second Day," etc. The only exception is Friday which is the sacred day of the week and the Mohammedan Sabbath and is named "The Day of the Congregation"

because then they all go to the markets to pray and hear a sermon.

A busy market is held at "Suk el Khamis" every Thursday all the year round, rain or shine (and it generally is shine in Arabia), out in the open air near the ruins of an old mosque about three miles distant from Menama village at Bahrein where the missionaries live. The two tall minarets on the mosque can be seen from the market. It is one of the oldest mosques in East Arabia, and was built several hundred years ago and rebuilt several times. Now it is no longer used to pray in nor does the call to prayer ever ring out from the minarets. The fact is that one Moslem sect after another took possession of the building, and in the religious disputes that arose the building itself went into decay. One part of the mosque is now used for a goat pen. The gray square stones of which the mosque was once built are scattered about and serve as seats for visitors, and every traveller who visits Bahrein climbs up one of the minarets and gets a fine view of the islands. If you can read the old writing carved on the stones in Arabic script, you can see how often this mosque has changed hands between the rival parties in the Moslem world called Shiahs and Sunnis, and if you should ever visit the missionary rooms of the Reformed Church in New York, the secretary there can show you a gavel or mallet made from a beam of wood which was once in the roof of this very mosque. A piece of the old beam fell

to the ground and was made into a mallet to show that the religion of Islam in Arabia is decaying and that missionaries to Moslems need not be afraid to enter the country of Mohammed.

Every Thursday morning the plain around this mosque is a busy scene. How often I have ridden down to this market on a donkey or walked in the heat of the sun and have seen a thousand or more people crowded together in all their bright coloured garments, men and women and children, busily engaged in trade, in play, or in quarrels over the price of an article! One man, perhaps, brings a load of water jars from the village of Ali. Another has a big donkey load of ropes or mats for sale, and still another brings great baskets of melons, pomegranates, dates, limes and vegetables. Women, covered over with their heavy black veils and looking very mischievously through little peep holes for their eyes, crouch on the ground before their little open-air stands where they sell cheap jewelry and trinkets or tiny bottles of perfume and black antimony powder, which the Arab girls use for their eyes.

The barber is also busy and plies his razor with a deft hand while he shaves the heads and beards of those who come, charging only a few coppers for the job. The breadmaker arrives on the scene very early, and builds his small open oven to bake his flap-cakes. He rolls the dough on a board, flattens it out with his fingers and then tosses it against the sides of the hot oven where it sticks

fast and bakes into a large, light, palatable cake. Oh, how good such Arab bread is when you are hungry, or when you sit down to an Arab guest meal and have it served with fresh butter and honey !

More numerous and more loud than all the others who come are the half-naked Bedouins who come to sell a drove of sheep or barter for a couple of camels. They are all there this morning :

> " Rich man, poor man, beggar man, thief ;
> Doctor, lawyer, merchant, chief ;
> Butcher, baker and candlestick maker."

And if the candlestick maker, who sells more candles than candlesticks, is present, why should the missionary, who is sent to bring the Light of Life to men, be absent ?

As often as possible therefore we visit this market-place, and sell books and Bibles or preach to those who will listen. It is not at all an easy place to sell or to preach, but those who come there witness fine, splendid opportunities to meet men face to face, to get acquainted and to renew old acquaintance with villagers who come from distant parts of the Bahrein Island group. Here it is that many a gospel portion has exchanged hands and many a story of the power of Christ has been sowed as good seed in the hearts of the Arabs in the hope that God would use it to make them think of Jesus Christ as their Saviour. If books are sold they are often carried from here to distant villages, and it is possible to make

acquaintance here with Arabs who come from the mainland and are visiting the islands, while one is sure to meet old friends who have not been able to come to see you for a long time.

One merchant used to keep a dry-goods stand and was one of the few Moslems in the early days of our work who was always glad to welcome a missionary. When the sun was very hot the shelter of his mat-screen was a nice shady nook to sit down in and talk with wayfarers. Right near the tall minarets we sometimes discuss the Koran and its teachings, and tell the Arabs how the book of Mohammed is really a finger-post pointing them to the Gospel and to Jesus Christ, the Great Prophet Who is alive forevermore. Will you not pray that every Thursday God will bless this little acre, the market-place of Suk el Khamis, where we sow the seed of God's Own Word, waiting for the harvest?

'Sowing the seed with an aching heart,
Sowing the seed while the tear-drops start,
Sowing the seed till the reapers come
Gladly to gather the harvest home;
Gathered in time or eternity,
Sure, ah sure, will the harvest be."

V

WHERE THE QUEEN OF SHEBA LIVED

YOU have all read the story given in 1 Kings x. of the Queen of Sheba and her visit to Solomon of whose fame she had heard in her distant kingdom in Southwest Arabia, but the story as told in Mohammed's Bible, the Koran, is very different, and has many curious fables mixed up with it. It is found in the chapter called "The Ant," and this is how he tells it.

"We heretofore bestowed knowledge on David and Solomon: and they said, Praise be unto God, who hath made us more excellent than many of His faithful servants! And Solomon was David's heir; and he said, O men, we have been taught the speech of birds, and have had all things bestowed on us; this is manifest excellence. And his armies were gathered together unto Solomon, consisting of genii, and men and birds; and they were led in distinct bands, until they came unto the valley of ants. And an ant, seeing the hosts approaching, said, O ants, enter ye into your habitations, lest Solomon and his army tread you under feet, and perceive it not. And Solomon smiled, laughing at her words, and said, O Lord, excite me that I may be thankful for Thy favour wherewith Thou hast favoured me and my parents; and that I may do that which is right and well-pleasing unto Thee; and introduce me, through Thy mercy, into Para-

dise, among Thy servants the righteous. And he viewed the birds, and said, What is the reason that I see not the lapwing? Is she absent? Verily I will chastise her with a severe chastisement, or I will put her to death, unless she bring me a just excuse. And she tarried not long before she presented herself unto Solomon, and said, I have viewed a country which thou hast not viewed; and I come unto thee from Saba, with a certain piece of news. I found a woman to reign over them, who is provided with everything requisite for a prince, and hath a magnificent throne. I found her and her people to worship the sun, besides God."

The Koran then goes on to tell how Solomon sent her a letter, and she sent ambassadors to him, and finally asked one of his terrible jinn to bring her to him, throne and all, from Southwest Arabia. He did it in the twinkling of an eye, and after she saw Solomon and his glory she was converted to his religion!

Although this latter story of the Queen of Sheba is evidently fabulous, there is no doubt that the Bible story is true, because recent explorers have visited the country of the Queen of Sheba and her old capital Marib, a short distance east of Sanaa, and have brought back inscriptions which tell of the ancient glory of her kingdom. In the Old Testament the Sabaeans lived in Sheba, and their caravans brought gold and precious stones and spices into distant lands. (See Job vi. 19; Ezek. xxvii. 22, and Psalm lxxii. 10.)

IN THE CAMEL COUNTRY
A R A B I A

On my first and second visit to Sanaa, the high mountain capital of all Yemen, I was privileged to look over into the borders of the country where the Queen of Sheba lived, and on the journey described in Chapter III I probably travelled from the coast by the same road which was used in the days of Solomon. It is not easy to build roads in so mountainous a country. Everywhere one can see the ruins of the old Himyarite civilization which flourished here from the time of Solomon until the Christian era. Some of the roads undoubtedly have been kept in repair ever since they were built along the mountainside by these early engineers. Stone bridges across torrent beds, tanks for holding water, and old castles with inscriptions in the strange language, still witness to the strength and vigour of this old empire. The accompanying picture is not that of the Queen of Sheba herself, but is undoubtedly that of a princess in the Sheba country. It was found among many, many other inscriptions and carvings in the land south of Marib, the old capital, where the famous dyke was built which was destroyed by a flood. When you study the picture, you will notice that the woman's dress, with its ornaments and without a veil, the use of a throne, the carved pillars, and the page boys (or are they girls?) in waiting, are all so very different from the Arabia of to-day. The picture is also interesting when we remember how the early travellers and scientists who copied or brought back these famous inscriptions have confirmed the history of the Old Testa-

ment and its many references to South Arabia. One of them says: "The Queen of Sheba proved Solomon with hard questions, all of which in his wisdom he answered her. Now we who study the Old Testament, reversing the process, go to the wonderland of that queen with a multitude of inquiries, to many of which it has already given us a satisfactory reply."

The capital of the Queen of Sheba, Marib, is largely in ruins, but something of the glory of the old civilization still lingers at Sanaa, which is at once one of the most beautiful and one of the most ancient cities of Arabia, built before the time of Solomon. It lies in a wide valley 7,250 feet above sea level. Jebel Nakum, with its marble quarries, rises abruptly like a fortress, just east of the city. The town is surrounded by a high wall, and has four gates. The houses are many of them four and five stories high, built of stone, and as they have no window-glass, they use slabs of alabaster instead. The population of the city is about fifty thousand, of whom more than twenty thousand are Jews.

My first visit to the city was in 1891, and the second in 1894. The first time I came straight up from Hodeida through Menakha, and in four days reached the city. The second journey was from Aden northward, leaving on July 2d, but what with delays and accidents and imprisonment by the Turks at Taiz, I did not reach Yemen's capital until the 2d of August. The most surprising thing about Sanaa is not its old ruins, nor the wonderful

A picture carved in stone 2,000 years old, with its inscription, from the land of Sheba

fertility of the country round about, but the interesting character of its population. Here was a large city full of Jews who came to this part of the world, as they themselves testified, long before the destruction of Jerusalem; Greek merchants were carrying on a brisk trade in all the manufactured articles of Europe with the Arabs of the interior; Turkish army officials in splendid uniform trying in vain, as they are to-day, with their regiments of Turkish troops to put down Arab rebellions; and then the Arabs themselves, men, women and children, strong mountaineers, with love for liberty and heartily despising the government of which they are unwilling subjects.

Looking northward from this city you can see the highlands of Asir and the distant road that leads through Nejran. All this country was once Christian, and in Sanaa itself stood the great cathedral built by the Abyssinian king, Abraha, about the time when Mohammed was born. From Sanaa he led his army to Mecca, hoping to take the city and convert it to the Christian faith, but he was not successful. In the Koran chapter of "The Elephant," you may read how the Christians were defeated when smallpox broke out among them. Standing on the slopes of Jebel Nakum and looking eastward, the country of the Queen of Sheba is spread out before you. You can imagine I was very sorry that, having been robbed of all my money on the way, it was impossible to carry out my plan of going from Sanaa to Marib, and from there right across Arabia to Bahrein. Perhaps some of

you who read these lines will be privileged to make this journey. If you are, you will pass through some of the most interesting ruins in the world, and the hardships of a camel journey will be abundantly compensated by what you see on the road.

VI

THE JEWS OF KHEIBAR

NEARLY all of the people who live in the country of the camel are Mohammedans, but it was not always so. Before the days of Mohammed, the prophet, there were very many Christians in Arabia and also many Jews. The former lived mostly in the southern part of the great peninsula, but the Jews had large settlements not only in the country of the Queen of Sheba—of which we have heard—but also at Mecca and Medina, which are now the two sacred cities, and especially in the country north of Medina, Kheibar. Some of these children of Israel came to Arabia at the time of the captivity when they were driven from their own country by persecution, and settled down in the rich and fertile valleys of Nejran and on the hills of Yemen. Others came to Arabia about the time when Jesus Christ was born.

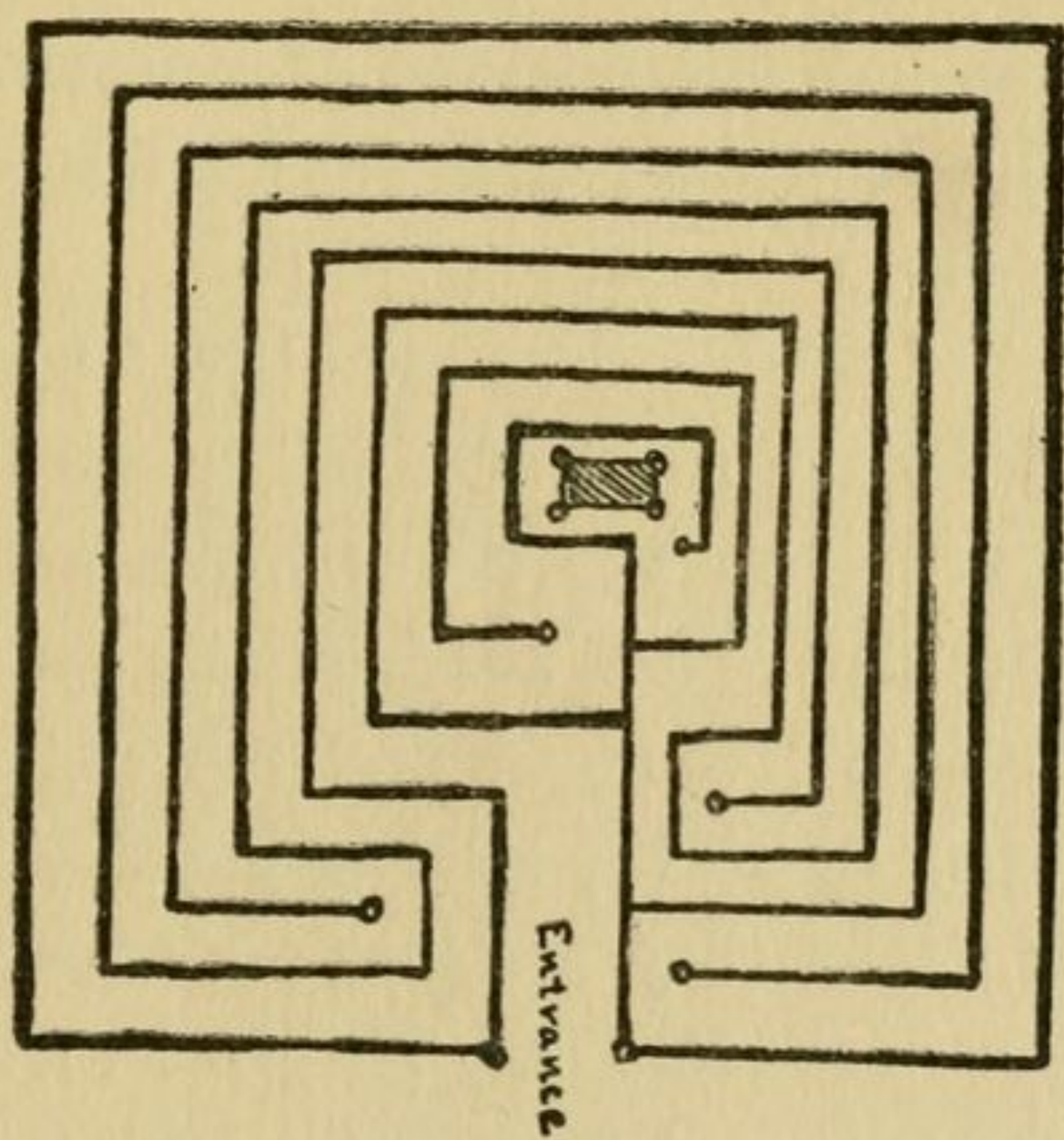
There are Jews in Arabia still but not nearly as many as in the olden time. Their condition, too, is very sad and they are often sorely oppressed by the Moslems. There is no missionary working among them at present, although they have been visited by colporteurs who brought them the New Testament in the Hebrew language so that they might read for themselves the story of the Saviour Jesus Christ. I once had the pleasure of

talking to a large company of Jews in the capital city of Yemen, Sanaa, and it was very touching to realize that these Jews were not of the number whose ancestors rejected Jesus and led Him out to be crucified, because as they themselves told me their forefathers had left the Holy Land many, many years before Jesus was born at Bethlehem.

But I want to tell you about the Jews of Kheibar. Northeast of the city where Mohammed lies buried, Medina, there is a barren stretch of rocky country and in the midst of it a valley where there are some springs of water and where with great toil it is possible to produce some vegetation. Here it was that thousands of Jews settled in the days before Mohammed, tilled the soil and lived happily until the Arabian prophet with his fierce warriors came preaching a new religion and filling the valley with the dead bodies of those who would not accept it.

You may read the story of this expedition of Mohammed in the history of his life. So bloody was the battle fought between the Jews and the Moslems that the Bedouins of that region when they see the iron rust on the banks of the brooks still say: "Look how the earth is purging itself of the much blood of the Jews that was spilled in the conquest of Kheibar." According to the stories told by the Arab writers it was a desperate struggle. The Jews did not give Mohammed, the prophet, any easy victory. To defend themselves against Bedouin

robbers and against assault they had built in the midst of their valley several castles or forts, one of which was so wonderful that it has very often been celebrated among the Arabs. It was called the Castle of Kheibar or Kamoos. An old Jewish warrior told the people that if they would build a fort in exact obedience to his written command it would be so strong that no enemy could overcome them or enter the fort. And these were his instructions: "Build the castle with eight gates and only one entrance; the walls eightfold and square; the entrance from the fifth; the second, the fourth; the third, the first; the



THE CASTLE OF KHEIBAR.

fourth, the second; the fifth, the third; the sixth and seventh and eighth unchanged." I will not leave you to puzzle over these strange instructions. An Arab friend

of mine who told me the story drew the castle for me and here you have it. If you will try to find your way to the keep of the castle where the Jews defended themselves, you will agree that it is not surprising that it took Mohammed twenty days to storm it. When the castle was taken, the booty divided and the captives slain in a most cruel manner, Mohammed took Safia, the widow of the chief of Kheibar to his tent as his captive. Zainab, the sister of the warrior who fought against Mohammed and who herself had lost her brother, her husband and her father in the battle, tried the next day to kill the prophet of Arabia by sending him some mutton into which she had put poison, but her attempt at vengeance was not successful. The Moslems say it was a miracle that their prophet escaped.

The conquest of the Jews was complete, for all the Jews that escaped from the siege of Kheibar were obliged to turn Moslems and there never was freedom for the Jew again in all Arabia. They are generally heavily taxed, have no redress against abuse and repression and are looked down upon by all the Moslem population. In the capital city of Sanaa they are not even allowed to carry arms or to ride in the streets. They must live in a separate part of the town and draw water from wells of their own.

At Aden and in other parts of British Arabia the Jews are prosperous, but everywhere else their lot is not a happy one. The total number of Jews in Arabia is per-

Water carts used at Aden to bring water from the wells to the city

haps two hundred thousand. One half of them at present live in Yemen and the rest mostly in Bagdad and Busrah.

The traveller who goes on shore at Aden on his way to India never fails to meet the Jews. In fact, they besiege every passing steamer and are anxious to sell their wares, ostrich eggs, ostrich feathers, coins, and curios. You can at once tell them from their peculiar habit of wearing two locks of hair in front of their ears. Many of the Jews in Arabia are utterly given over to money getting and worldly pleasures, but others are strong in their religion and look forward still for the hope of Israel. They are always glad to purchase the Hebrew Bible and to send their children to school.

Pray for this despised and rejected people there in Arabia and everywhere that more may be done for their salvation and that missionaries may be sent to work especially for these "lost sheep of the house of Israel" who have so long been living in the tents of Ishmael! Perhaps God wants one of you to come out and tell them the story of Jesus Christ Who must love them more than we do as He is one of themselves.

VII

AMULETS AND OTHER EVERY-DAY THINGS

DID you ever see a woman or a girl dressed in such a strange way as the one in the picture? Of course you know that Moslem women wear veils, but this veil is like a window-casing with the panes of glass knocked out. It is made of stiff cloth, heavily embroidered, sometimes with gilt or silver embroidery, and has a nose piece and strings to fasten around the head. In addition to this curious veil you notice that she has three bracelets on each arm, and you can get a glimpse of her nose jewel hanging underneath the veil. Of course she wears earrings and anklets. The most conspicuous part of her jewelry, however, is the amulet case which hangs by a silver chain from around her neck, and has beautiful bangles attached to it below. Nearly every one in Topsy Turvy Land wears amulets. They are worn not for ornament, but for protection, and no one would think of leaving them at home if he went on a journey.

Amulets and charms are worn not only by the Arabs themselves and to protect their children from the evil eye, but they are put over the doors of their houses, and hung on camels, donkeys, horses, fishing boats, in fact, anywhere and everywhere to ward off danger and death. Only yesterday a little boy came to our church service, whose mother is still a Moslem, and he had hanging from

A Woman of the Hill Tribes, showing veil and amulets worn

his neck a whole collection of curious things, beads, bones, sacred relics, etc., all to protect him from the evil eye.

All sorts of things are used as amulets in Arabia, and their use is justified by the saying of Mohammed himself: "There is no wrong in using charms and spells so long as you do not associate anything with God." The most common things used as amulets are a small Koran suspended in a silver case; words from the Koran written on paper and carried in a leather receptacle; the names of Allah or their numerical value; the names of Mohammed and his companions; precious stones with or without inscriptions; beads; old coins; clay images; the teeth of wild animals; holy earth from Mecca or Kerbela in the shape of tiny bricks, or in small bags. When the Kaaba covering at Mecca is taken down each year and renewed, the old cloth is cut up into small pieces and sold for charms.

The women in Mecca use an amulet of special power called "Mishkash," which is supposed to exercise its virtue for the increase of the family. The "Mishkash" is really a copy of an old Venetian coin, representing the Duke of Venice kneeling before St. Mark on the one side, and on the other side is the image of Christ surrounded by stars. Of course the women themselves are in total ignorance of the inscription on the coin and of its Christian character.

According to the principles of Islam only verses from the Koran should be used, but the door of superstition

once being set ajar by Mohammed himself, as we know from the story of his life, it is now wide open. The chapters from the Koran which are most often selected for use as amulets and put in the little cases shown in the picture are Surahs I, VI, XVIII, XXXVI, XLIV, LV, LXVII, LXXVIII. There are five verses in the Koran called the verses of protection, "Ayat-el-Hifdh," which are the most powerful to defend from evil. They read as follows: "The preservation of heaven and earth is no burden unto Him;" "God is the best protector;" "They guard him by the command of God;" "We guard him from every stoned devil;" "A protection from every rebellious devil." These verses are written with great care and with a special kind of ink by those who deal in amulets, and are then sold for a good price to Moslem women and children. The ink used for writing amulets is saffron water, the juice of onions, water from the sacred well of Zem Zem, and sometimes even human blood. It is very important that the one who writes the amulet be a holy man in the Moslem sense of that word. We are told in Arabic books on the subject (and these books are printed by the thousands) that "The diet of the one who prepares charms depends on the kind of names of God which he intends to write or recite. If they are the terrible attributes of Allah, then he must refrain from the use of meat, fish, eggs, honey and musk. If they are His amiable attributes, he must abstain from butter, curds, vinegar, salt and ambergris."

A favourite kind of amulet is called the magic square, and I have drawn one here for you. Most of the Arabs believe that there are only four elements, earth, air, fire and water, and under these four names they have numerical squares, as you see them, of the numbers one to sixteen, and whichever way you add the columns up and down or across the total is always thirty-four. Try it.

EARTH

8	11	14	1
13	2	7	12
3	16	9	6
10	5	4	15

WATER

14	4	1	15
7	9	12	6
11	5	8	10
2	16	13	3

AIR

15	1	4	14
10	8	5	11
6	12	9	7
3	13	16	2

FIRE

1	14	15	4
8	11	10	5
12	7	6	9
13	2	3	16

Among the Shiah Moslems, whom we meet everywhere in East Arabia, the most common amulet is called *Nadi-*

Ali. It consists generally of a lead or silver plate with little bells at the bottom, inscribed with these words:

> "Cry aloud to Ali; he is the possessor of wonders,
> From him you will find help from trouble.
> He takes away very quickly all grief and anxiety
> By the mission of Mohammed and his own sanctity."

There are innumerable cases where such amulets are used for the cure of disease. The native doctors firmly believe that when every remedy fails, the book of Allah, if properly administered, internally or externally, will drive away pain and cure the patient.

The hospitals and book-shops and schools will doubtless in time drive out the use of amulets in Arabia, and the march of civilization, with its modern scientific miracles and spirit of investigation, is also a means to that end. Nevertheless, I have known of cases where printed Arabic gospels were bought to be used as amulets and where patients tried to rub off ink from the printed paper used to wrap powders in at the hospital, in order to drink the solution as a remedy.

There are other things in Arabia which, though not amulets, will strike you as very strange. First there is the market basket, deftly woven out of palm leaves. When this is smeared with bitumen inside, it will hold water as well as an American pail or a bucket. The Arab broom is made of palm leaf fibre, with a short handle, and the dish cover below it is also made of palm fibre and rope, and is beautifully stained with colours,

and when they bring in a dish of Hassa dates to entertain guests, such a cover is always put on to protect it from the flies.

The sewing basket and the fan and the woman's sandals are also very interesting. The men's sandals, as well as the women's sandals, have a peg or leather thong, which goes between the big toe and the one next to it, and by which they cling to their footgear in a way that would surprise you. Because the women's slippers are made of wood, you can hear their footsteps when they are a great way off, and the clap-clap of the women's sandals is a familiar sound to all of us here in Arabia.

What do you think of their beautiful furniture? There are small tables used to hold water jars or trays of food, and folding bookstands cleverly made out of one piece of hard wood that fold up for a journey. Larger bookstands are made of date sticks and are strong enough to support a big volume of the Koran. The Arabs love to sit and swing back and forth as they chant its chapters. And lastly is something that looks very much like an amulet, but which is a traveller's bag for bread and dates, often fastened to the camel saddle by leather thongs. Bread or dates kept in such a receptacle will keep moist for many, many hours in the hot, dry climate of Arabia.

The Arabs are not skilled as the Japanese and Chinese are with tools, nor are they much given to art of any kind, but you must admit that such every-day things are many of them artistic and some of them really beautiful.

VIII

THE MOST WONDERFUL STONE IN THE WORLD

THE Ten Commandments were written on two tables of stone but these original stones are lost; the High Priest Aaron had twelve most precious stones in his breast plate when he went into the holy place to minister; Jacob placed a stone for a pillow when he fled from his brother, but no one has found this old memorial. Many other wonderful stones are held almost sacred because of past history. Stone worship is one of the oldest forms of idolatry. The old Druid stone in England, where the priests offered sacrifice during their worship and where even human blood was spilt in the name of religion, are examples.

Plymouth Rock is also a famous stone from its part in history. It marks the place where the Pilgrim fathers landed in 1620. There have also been precious stones which have had a remarkable history and for which much money and often life was sacrificed, and then none of the boys can forget the pebble which David found in the brook and which was the weapon of his victory over great Goliath.

But the most wonderful stone in the world to-day is none of these that I have told you of. It is the Black Stone of the old idol temple in Arabia, now the centre of Mohammedan worship.

Everyday things in Arabia

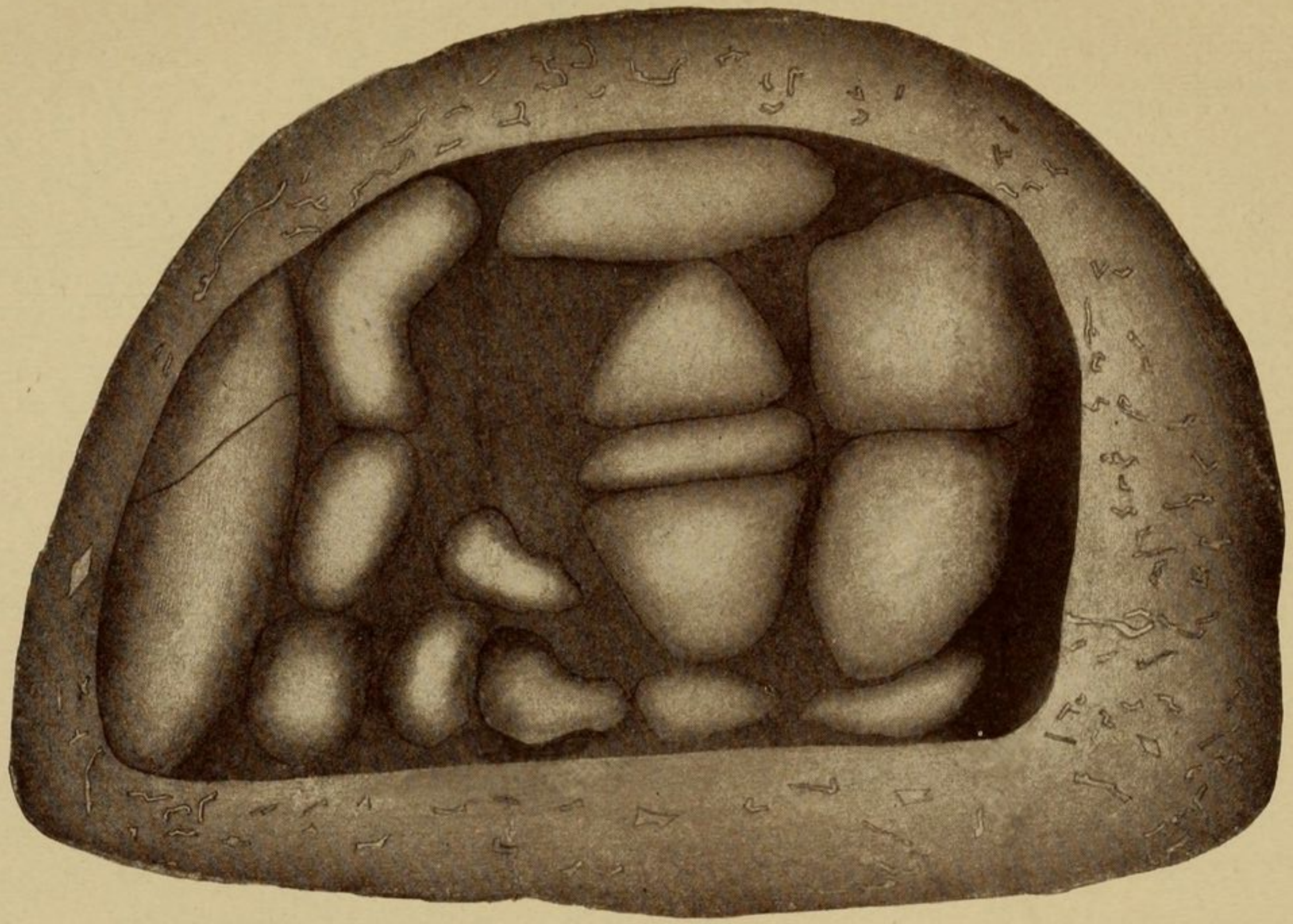
The greater number of the tribes of Arabia in Mohammed's day, if they had any religion at all, were little better than fetich worshippers, each tribe having its own idol or god, which in many cases was some peculiar tree or rock in their territory, around which they built rude shrines, and to which they made pilgrimages. From time immemorial, however, there was one fetich which the whole race seemed to regard as peculiarly sacred, and that was the Kaaba, or sacred stone of Mecca. It is probable that this stone was a shooting star, which, falling from heaven in the presence of spectators, became ever after an object of superstitious veneration, just as the stone of Diana of Ephesus became the centre of worship for the Greek world. The tribe to which Mohammed belonged had held for several generations the office of stewards to this great national shrine, to encourage the flocking of pilgrims to the Kaaba. From this source the wealthy families of Mecca got the great part of their money. They admitted impartially figures of all the idols of the tribes from one end of Arabia to the other, so that each man might feel at home when he arrived there for his devotions.

When Mohammed had fully established his new religion he turned out all the old deities *except* the Black Stone, which he himself worshipped, and concerning which worship he left minute directions for his followers. Such was the inconsistency of the prophet whose creed was "There is no god but Allah." The object of the pil-

grimage as instituted by Mohammed was to worship the Sacred Mosque and Kaaba. According to Moslem writers, the Kaaba was built by Adam, exactly under the spot occupied by God's throne in heaven. It is an oblong building in the centre of the mosque, covered with a black cloth, and in it is the sacred Black Stone which came down from heaven snow-white, and was turned black by the sins of the people.

The Black Stone is located on the southeast corner of the Kaaba, about five feet from the ground. It is probably an aerolite, black and sprinkled with lighter patches and came down as a falling star. Many years after Mohammed's death it was stolen by some of the Arabs on the Persian Gulf and carried across the desert to Katif; when it was carried back again it fell from the camel on its long journey and was broken. Now a silver band holds the pieces together and the whole stone is imbedded in the wall.

It is necessary for every Moslem to visit Mecca at least once during his lifetime. When all these pilgrims arrive within a short distance of the Holy City, they must put off their every-day clothing and put on the pilgrim garb, which consists of two pieces of white cloth,—one tied around the loins and the other drawn over the shoulders, under their arm, leaving one shoulder bare. The pilgrims are allowed to wear sandals, but not shoes. Thus clad every one goes in turn to the sacred well of Zem Zem, washes his whole body with a pailful of the



The Black Stone at Mecca

water, and then drinks as much as he cares. Then he enters the "door of peace" and kisses the most wonderful stone in the world, running around the Kaaba seven times and each time when he passes the stone he strokes it with his hand or kisses it. After this all the Moslem pilgrims say the regular prayer and retire.

The next day, those who are seeking Paradise along the zigzag road of Mohammed's religion must do other things as well. They must visit the place where Abraham is supposed to have stood, when he rebuilt the Kaaba. Then they must run between the mountains of Safa and Milra, two little hills near Mecca, and do other things every day until the sixth day, when all the pilgrims surround the Kaaba as they did on the first day. On the seventh day the sermon is preached from the great pulpit in the middle of the building. The preacher no doubt urges all those who are present to persevere in their religion and make converts among the nations. It is a large gathering indeed which comes to Mecca. Between seventy and eighty thousand people travel every year to visit the city from every part of the Moslem world,—Europe, Asia, Africa and the islands of the sea. After the sermon is over two more days are spent in various visits to sacred places around Mecca and then comes the greatest day of all, which is celebrated all over the Moslem world, namely, the day of Sacrifice.

Although Mohammedans deny the death of Christ and the need of an atonement for sin, it is strange that

this great feast should still be a feast of sacrifice, like that of the Jews of old. Every earnest believer takes a goat, a sheep or a camel, places it so as to face the Kaaba and plunges a knife into its throat as he cries out—"God is great and Mohammed is His apostle." When the sacrifice is over the pilgrim is allowed again to shave his beard and trim his nails and put on his ordinary clothing, all of which was forbidden during the ten days of pilgrimage. He is also given a certificate stating that he has finished the pilgrimage and is now ready for Paradise, or words to that effect.

The most of the pilgrims who come back from Mecca are not any better for going, because the city is the centre not only of diseases such as cholera and plague, which cause the death of many, but is also the centre of immorality and wickedness.

Although travellers have visited Mecca by pretending to be Mohammedans and at the risk of their lives, no Christian, were he known to be so, would be allowed to enter the sacred city. The first European to visit Mecca was an English sailor boy, called Joseph Pitts, who was captured as a slave in Algiers and taken to Mecca against his will. He was forced to become a Moslem, but afterwards escaped to England and wrote a book on what he had seen.

The new railroad which is now being built by the Turkish government from Damascus to Medina and on to Mecca will soon be completed, and who can say whether

it will not open up the whole country to the Gospel? A big American locomotive will soon be puffing steam and sounding its whistle right near the Kaaba, over against the most wonderful stone in the world.

IX

THE CAMEL DRIVER WHO BECAME A PROPHET

IF one could have all the boys of the world pass by in single file and take down their names one by one, there would be a great many who bore the same name. Johns and Henrys and Carls and Hans there would be by the thousands, but there would be no name which so many boys had in common, I am sure, as the name of Mohammed. It is a very safe estimate to say that there are living in the world to-day no less than five million boys and men who bear that name.

Yet I wonder how many of you know who Mohammed was, where he lived and died, and why he has such a world-wide reputation? He was a poor orphan; his father died before he was born and his mother only a few years after, but although he was so forlorn and lived in a very barren part of Arabia, in one of the valleys of the city of Mecca, he had powerful relatives who were kind to him and helped him. He was born in the year 570 A. D., about a thousand years before Columbus discovered America. His mother's name was Amina, which means faithful.

There are many strange stories told about him when he was a boy. One story is that while he was away in the desert with his foster brother, living with the Arab tribes and growing strong by exercise and drinking camels'

milk, one day two men dressed in white came and threw him on the ground. They then took out his heart, by opening his breast, and squeezed out a drop of black blood, and put the heart back again, closing up the wound. The Arabs believe that in this way he got rid of his original sin and was made pure. As a boy he was pleasing and industrious, and won the name of "the faithful one." However, at the time of Mohammed's childhood, morals and manners in Mecca were as bad as possible, and he did not have many good influences to help him in the right way.

When he was about twelve years old, his uncle, Abu-Talib, took him along on a journey to Syria, as far as Bozra, a town that is mentioned in the Bible, and not the same as Busrah on the Persian Gulf. This journey lasted for some months, and it was at this time that Mohammed met a Christian monk, who, it is reported, told Abu-Talib to take good care of the youth, for great dignity awaited him.

On this journey Mohammed for the first time came in touch with Christianity, and was surely impressed by the national and social customs of Christians; and being a bright boy, he was easily able to see the difference between the habits and religion of his own nation and those of the Christians. It was after this journey that he was anxious to reform the dreadful idolatry and wicked ways of the Arabian people. From the age of twelve to twenty he lived in the usual manner of the boys of his day, tend-

ing sheep on the hillsides and valleys of Mecca, and he was so honest and pure and fair during these years, and such a contrast to those around him, that everybody gave him the name I told you of—Al Amin, *i. e.*, "the faithful." During this time, too, he learned something of what war was like, for he went with his uncles on two expeditions to fight against another tribe. When Mohammed was twenty-five years old, his uncle suggested that he should take charge of a caravan for a rich lady living in Mecca, and trading products of Mecca for other things from Syria and other parts of Arabia. On this journey Mohammed again came in contact with Christians and Jews, and he must have noticed, too, how, while professing to serve and love the one true God, they always seemed to be quarrelling about their religion. Perhaps he saw the truth in both systems and afterwards thought he could make out of them one simple creed and unite all mankind in the worship of the only true God.

After his return from this trip, he was married to Khadijah, by whom he had been employed as camel driver, making zigzag journeys across the country to sell and exchange his merchandise. After his marriage he lived happily, so we are told, until his fortieth year, when he began to have dreams, and became persuaded that God had called him to be a prophet. Many verses of the Koran were recited and written down. Mohammed wanted most of all at this time that his countrymen should put away their idols and worship only Allah, but some

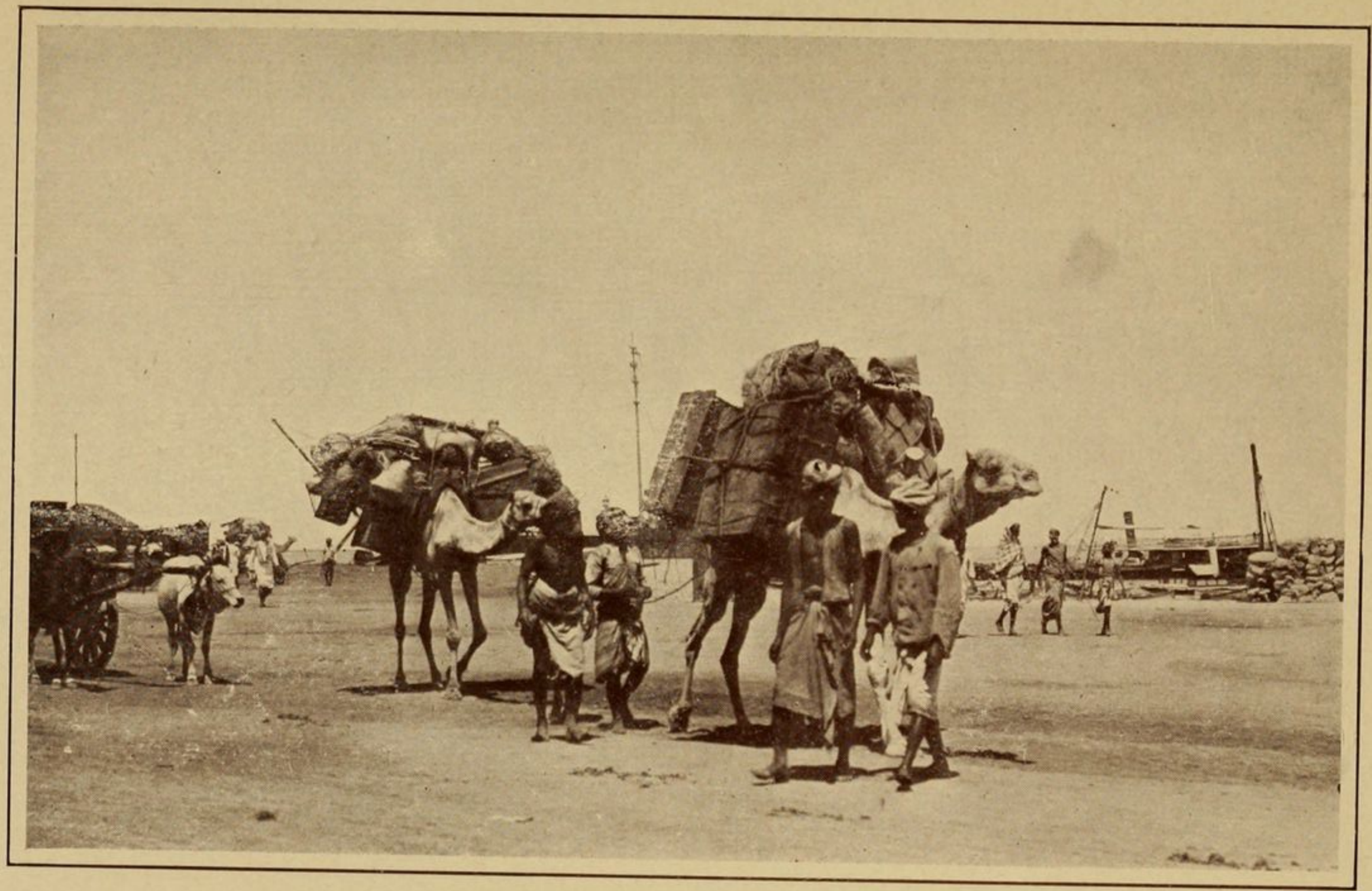
of them were very angry and would have killed him, if he had not hidden.

Mohammed and Khadijah had six children, but most of them died when they were young. His daughter Fatimah, when she was old enough, was married to her adopted brother, Ali; her name is very much honoured and used by Moslems everywhere.

Sometimes Mohammed would have his dreams very often, and then again he would go a long time without a revelation. But he began to believe in himself and told his visions to others, and they too began to believe in him as a prophet of God. His relatives were the first ones to come out and follow the new religion. He wanted to take the idols out of the Kaaba at Mecca, and preached against idolatry, and for this reason the keepers of the Kaaba were very angry and persecuted him for his preaching. When the persecution became too bad, he then recanted or withdrew some of his statements in regard to the idols and the true worship, and he told them he had had a vision or revelation that they might retain their most important gods, or rather, the favourite ones. But after a few days he repented of this leniency, and told the Meccans he had made a mistake and all the idols must be destroyed, and they must worship Allah only. The people began to treat him badly and they would have killed him if he had not fled to Medina. The persecutors followed him and nearly overtook him, when he came to a cave and slipped inside, and one tradition says that after

the prophet (on him be prayers and peace) had gone inside, some pigeons came and sat on the edge of the cave; also a spider quickly wove a web across the mouth of the cave and when his pursuers came and looked they said: "He is not in there, for see the pigeons and the spider's web; he cannot be inside," and thus God preserved the life of Mohammed. Afterwards those men turned back, and he came out of the cave and went on to Medina. And there his religion prospered, and Mohammed saw a vision of the power he might hold, so little by little the stern purpose of his life—to cleanse his people from idol worship—became weaker. He gave in, here a little and there a little, and gave to his followers many harmful privileges, which he said were revelations from the Angel Gabriel to him. These same privileges have degraded the nations they have governed, and the religion of the sword and of plunder appealed to the human heart more than spiritual things possibly could. He soon gained many thousands of followers, and grew strong and bold, and began to organize bands to go out and kill and destroy all who would not follow the new religion.

And thus the camel driver became a great prophet. His name to-day is called out five times a day from the minarets (*i. e.*, mosque steeples) in Central Asia, along the shores of the Mediterranean, in the heart of Africa, in India and the islands of the sea, as well as all over Arabia and Persia and the Turkish Empire. And if you wish to help bring back these nations to Jesus Christ and



When the Arabs return from pilgrimage, they load their baggage on the poor, patient camel

away from Mohammed, you must be up with the muezzin before the dawn, and pray and call others to prayer and work in earnest, so that the children of this generation may have a chance to learn about our Saviour and theirs, and of all the helpful things He has taught us.

"Hark! 'Tis the muezzin's cry;
Pray, children, pray;
Moslems in darkness lie,
Pray, children, pray.
Thousands in bondage die;
O hear, while moments fly,
Yours is a calling high:
Pray, children, pray."

X

THE LANGUAGE OF THE ANGELS

THE Arabs are a proud and noble race. They are proud of their liberty and of their free open-air desert customs. They are proud of their religion and of their prophet. They are proud of their history and of their patriarchal descent. But most of all, they are proud of their language, one of the oldest and most wonderful forms of human speech. Mohammed himself in his Koran, which you know is the Moslem Bible, speaks of the Arab tongue as "the language of the angels." He and the Arabs believed that Adam and Eve spake Arabic in Paradise, and that the language of revelation in which God spoke to His prophets, Abraham, Moses and Solomon, was none other than the language of the desert, the speech of the Arabs.

One of the most learned Arabs who lived about three hundred years after Mohammed said: "The wisdom of God hath come down upon three things:—the brain of the Franks, the hand of the Chinese and the tongue of the Arabs." What this Arab philosopher meant was that while the people of Europe are distinguished for their power of invention and discovery, the Chinese are distinguished as artists and artisans, but the Arabs are all of them born orators and poets. The people of Europe, he meant to say, have brain power, the people of the

Orient skill in handicraft, but the Arabs, eloquence. If you will read the Book of Job, which was doubtless written in Arabia and describes early Arabian life, or read the latter chapters of Mohammed's Koran, or better still some of the Arabian poetry, you will appreciate the truth of this wonderful statement.

The first thing that is remarkable about the language of the Arabs is its wide-spread use. Like English it has spilled itself all over the map of the world, far beyond its original limits, and like English it was carried by commerce and by conquest, by merchants and by missionaries.

Some time ago an American typewriter firm in advertising a machine with Arabic characters made the statement that the Arabic alphabet is used by more people than any other alphabet in the world. Some one thought that this was an exaggeration, and asked a professor of languages, "How big a lie is that?" He answered: "It is true." The total population of all the countries whose inhabitants use the Arabic "A B C"—if they use any at all—is larger than the number of those who use the Latin alphabet or the Chinese character. The Arabic Koran is read by the Moslem boys in the day-schools not only of Arabia, but of Turkey, of Afghanistan, Persia, Java, Sumatra, the whole of North Africa and throughout Central Asia. In the Philippine Islands there are three hundred thousand Mohammedans whose only alphabet came from Arabia, and as far west as the

سورة الفاتحة وهي سبع آيات

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العلمين ۝ الرحمن
الرحيم ۝ مالك يوم الدين ۝ إياك
نعبد وإياك نستعين ۝ اهدنا الصراط
المستقيم ۝ صراط الذين أنعمت عليهم
غير المغضوب عليهم ولا الضالين ۝

FIRST CHAPTER OF THE KORAN

mosques of Morocco the Arabic tongue has travelled and become the language of law and commerce and religion.

When the early Arabs in their conquests crossed the strait between Africa and Spain and conquered that country they left many words behind. And therefore many of the place names in Spain to-day are Arabic. Gibraltar, for example, is the corrupted form of Jebel Tarik, which means the mountain of Tarik, the Arab general who first crossed the straits with his soldiers. And Quadiliquiver, one of the rivers of Spain, should be spelled Wady El Kebir, or the Big River.

Even the English language has a number of words that came as Arab guests to the feast of reason and have been adopted into our family and put into our dictionary. When you speak of *algebra*, *ciphers*, *zero*, *alchemy*, *alcove*, *minaret*, *alcohol*, *coffee*, *sofa*, *amber*, *artichokes*, *gazelles* or *magazine* you are using good Arabic words which nearly every Arab would understand. To use these words, however, is quite a different thing from speaking "the language of the angels" correctly. It is easier to borrow a carpenter's jack-knife than to acquire his skill in building a house. Many languages have borrowed from the Arabs and the Arabs have borrowed from them in return, but no language is richer than the Arabic in its number of words.

Would you like to know how the boys and girls talk in Arabia? If you have read "Topsy Turvy Land" you will remember how they write their words backward and

begin to read at what we call the end of the book. Their talk as well as their writing seems to us at first very topsy turvy. Of course, I need not tell you how much they talk, for in that respect they are just like the boys and girls in America. As they speak a language, however, very different from English, I am sure you would like to hear a little about it. Arabic is one of the oldest and most beautiful languages, and also one of the hardest to learn. It has so many words that their name for a dictionary is "Kamoos," which means "an ocean." They have five hundred different names for a lion and two hundred words for serpent. It is said that there are one thousand different terms in Arabic for *sword*, and eighty different words for *honey*.

Like English the Arabic language has grammar with many rules (and more exceptions) and the boys dislike it just as much as some of you do. They have a severe struggle with the alphabet because each letter has three different forms, as it is used in the beginning, the middle or the end of a word; and then there are but fifteen conjugations and twenty different ways of forming the plural, not to speak of all the moods and tenses and the irregular verbs.

Some people think that Arabic is the most difficult language in the world. Keith Falconer, the first missionary to Arabia, said, "Arabic grammars should be strongly bound because learners are so often found to dash them frantically on the ground." Another mis-

sionary said that he would rather cross Africa from Alexandria to the Cape of Good Hope than undertake a second time to master the Arabic speech.

I shall never forget my early struggles with the language, nor the place where I sat down to learn my lesson with Dr. Cornelius Van Dyke. He was a master of Arabic and with Dr. Eli Smith translated the whole Bible into the Arabic speech. Here it was in the shade of his beautiful veranda at Beirut, Syria, that I began to learn the irregular verb. It takes a long time for grown-up people to learn a new language, but it does not seem hard for the Arab boys and girls.

Beside the proper talk of grown-up people there is baby talk in Arabia which mothers teach the little brown toddlers before they walk out of the mat-huts and the black, camel-hair tents into the wide world. Yes, and there are also slang words which the camel drivers and the donkey boys use with and on each other.

The baby talk is much like English. Father is *baba;* dog is *wowwow;* pretty is *noonoo;* stop is *tootoo;* chicken is *kookoo*, and when baby falls they say *baff!*

The language of these little angels and the grown-up ones in Arabia is very poetical. The Arabs, because they live in the desert and look up into the big, blue sky and far out to the horizon where the mirage paints desert pictures every day, are full of imagination and live in an atmosphere of poetry. They love jingling words and proverbs and pretty sayings and figures of speech.

A mosquito has only a sting in New Jersey. In Arabia they call him *aboo fas*, which means "father-of-an-ax"! In America a tramp is a tramp, but the Arabs call him a *son-of-the-road.* And what could be prettier than their name for echo, *bint-el-jebel*, "daughter of the mountain"? Why, there is a whole fairy story in that one word! And if you go down the columns of the Arabic dictionary you can find many a story locked up in some word and only waiting to be opened.

In North Arabia when they say, "How-do-you-do," the proper expression is, "What is the colour of your condition?" This may be philosophical, but it does not make good sense in English. Strawberries are called *French mulberries*, and the name given to potatoes when first brought to Bahrein was *aliyeywellam;* why this name was given, I cannot tell. Where could you find a better name for wine than the Arab *um-el-khabaith*, "mother of vices"? No wonder all the Arab children are staunch prohibitionists. And you will know more about the nights in Arabia when I tell you that the common name for jackal is "*son-of-howling*"!

"The language of the angels" is not altogether lovely and beautiful; alas, it bears the marks of a false religion all over it like scratches on marble or ink-stains on a beautiful piece of handwriting. Mohammed's life and Mohammed's teaching were not like the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and so the Arabic language abounds in words that are not pure and not lovely. The mission-

aries in Egypt and in Syria have done much to purify and elevate the language of the Arabs by giving them Christian books and papers and above all the Holy Bible in their own tongue. The Arab children in the mission schools now sing Christian hymns and many of the stories that you love to read, such as "Ben Hur" and "Black Beauty" and "Robinson Crusoe," have been translated into Arabic. At the Beirut press alone about twenty-five million pages of Christian books are printed every year.

When the Bible takes the place of the Koran, the Arab speech with all its beauty and strength will become more than ever "the language of the angels."

XI

PEARLS AND PEARL DIVERS

NEARLY all the British India steamers in their zigzag journeys up the Persian Gulf, calling first at the Arabian coast and then at the Persian coast, stop at the pearl islands of Bahrein. Half-way up the Gulf and thirty miles from the mainland of Arabia, this group of islands has been famous for centuries as the most valuable pearl fishery in the world. For at least two thousand years the Arabs have been diving in these waters and bringing up the costly shells. Before the days of Christ, and even before the time of Solomon, pearls from Bahrein were shipped to the Western world, and it is probable that the dress and the conversation of the men and the boys of to-day is about the same as it was a thousand years ago. The boats are probably of the same pattern, with very little improvement.

Bahrein is an Arabic word which means the *two seas*, and this name was given to the islands because the Arabs fancied that here two seas met, the fresh water and the salt water mingling together. The islands have very little rainfall—during the summer none at all—and yet they are famous for their fresh-water springs, which find their source on the mainland of Arabia or Persia, and the water not only bubbles out in pools and wells on

shore, but below the tide level there are fresh-water springs several miles out at sea. You would be interested to see the Arabs go out in their boats, place a bamboo over the opening in the rock and then collect fresh water above sea level in their great leather skins.

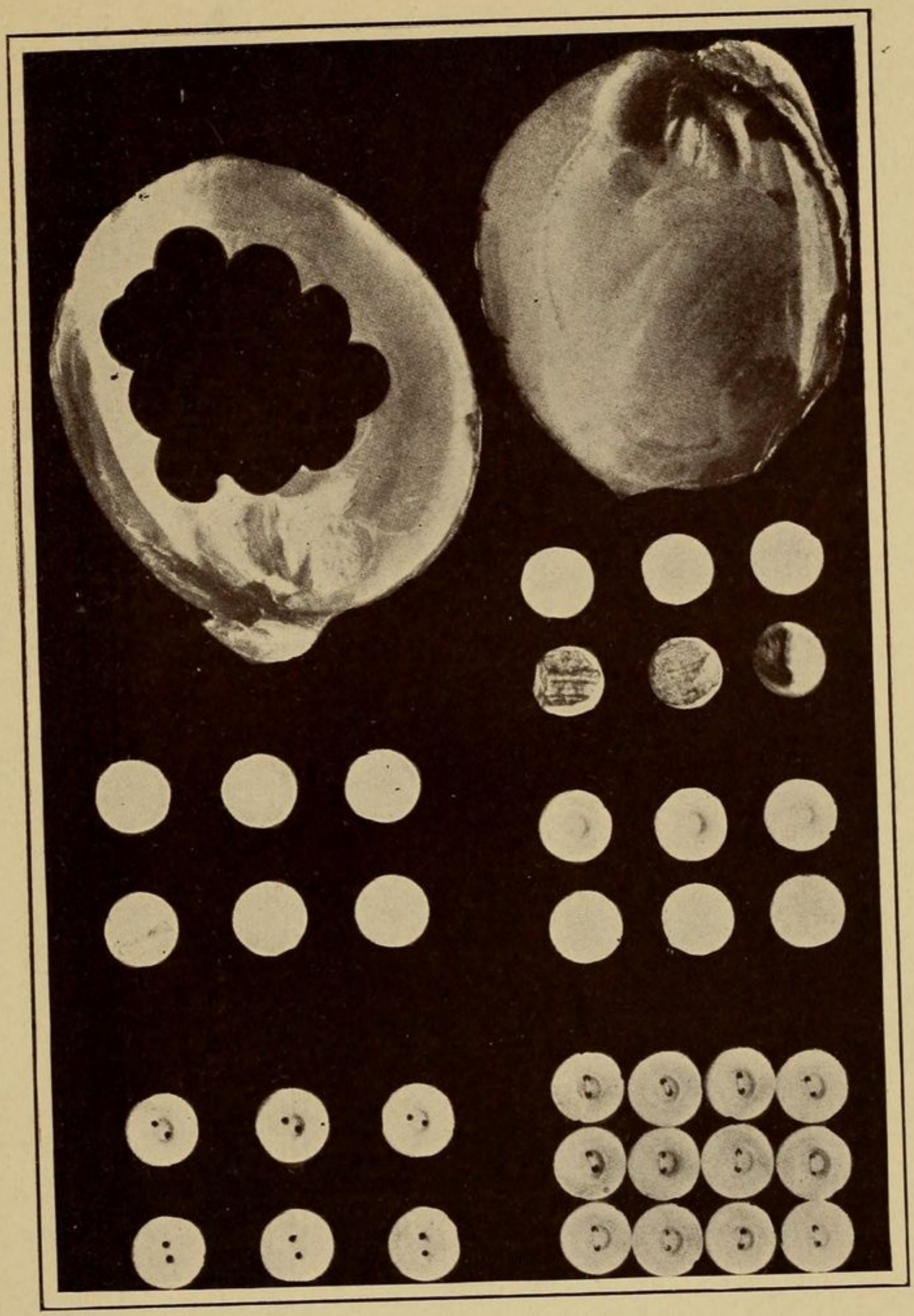
Bahrein is historically most interesting, because here the old Chaldeans and Phœnicians made their home. Some of the mounds on the island are older than the ruins of Babylon, and it is said that the Phœnicians worshipped the fish-god who, it is supposed, carried Noah's ark over the flood.

The pearl fisheries at Bahrein employ about 3,500 boats, large and small. The boats measure from one to fifty tons. The smaller boats carry from three to fifteen men and work near the shore; the large boats, employing from fifteen to thirty men, fish all over the Gulf. It is a pretty sight to see the fleet sailing out of the harbour, the large sails, set to the wind, gleaming white in the sun, the blue waters underneath and the bluer sky overhead. Have you ever seen a diving outfit? It looks rather ungainly to me. The Arab divers do not use anything so elaborate as do the divers in America. White overalls to cover their dark skin (because they say sharks do not care for white people), a *fatam*, or clothes-pin on the nose, and leather thimbles for scratching up the shells, and a basket to hold the catch, with a rope attached to a girdle to draw them up with—this is the complete outfit. When prayers have been said and a

Bismillah, down he goes, quickly fills the basket, and with a tug on the rope, he is hauled up, his basket is emptied while he takes a short breathing spell, then down again; and so on from sunrise to sunset.

The divers pass through many dangers in bringing the pearls from the bottom of the ocean to the surface. Sharks are the most terrifying, and during the pearl season a number of divers lose their lives, or are maimed; a leg or an arm has to be amputated because the cruel, sharp, powerful mouth of the shark caught the fisherman while he was seeking goodly pearls for us. A large number of them are afflicted with rheumatism as a consequence of their calling. In the boat, besides the men who are doing the work, is a man who is a substitute for them in prayer. The divers are too busy to observe the stated hours of prayer, so this man will repeat the prayers in place of each man. He is the Levite, and performs the religious ceremonies for every other man and boy. He must be occupied all the time on the boats where there is a crew of thirty men, and he must say the prayers five times a day for each man.

The Arabs say that pearls come from a raindrop which fell while the oyster had its mouth open; each drop of rain thus caught is a prize for the diver. "Heaven born and cradled in the deep blue sea," it is the purest of gems and, in their eyes, the most precious. When the pearl oysters are brought up, they are left on deck over night, and next morning are opened by means of a curved knife



The Evolution of a Pearl Button

six inches long. Until a few years ago, all the shells were thrown back into the sea as useless, but now they are brought to shore by the ton and deposited in some merchant's yard. He employs natives to scrape off the outside roughness, and then they are packed in wooden crates and exported in large quantities.

On shore the pearls are classified according to weight, size, shape, colour and brilliancy. You would think the pearl merchants a strange kind of people. They carry the most valuable pearls around with them everywhere, tied up in turkey-red twill. They have no safes nor banks, so the only safe way they can think of is to carry them around and run the risk of being knocked down and robbed; but since the Indian government has made Bahrein a protectorate, such robberies are rare.

The pearl merchants are called *tawawis*, which means those who handle the brass sieve, or *tas*. When the pearls are brought on shore, they are classified according to size first of all, and to do this, each merchant has a nest of beautiful sieves fitting one into the other. The smallest has holes as big as the end of a pencil, and they go down gradually in size until the largest sieve, which is about six inches across, has holes as fine as mustard seeds. Any day during the pearl season you may see the Arab merchants sitting cross-legged in their houses, sifting pearls, and when they are classified and piled up in little heaps, white and shining in the bright sunlight on the red cloth that covers the floor, it is a sight worth seeing.

The total value of the pearl harvest each year is at least a million dollars, but most of the profit goes into the hands of the dealers. The divers work for wages, and many of them are heavily in debt. In spite of the dangers they incur, the divers love their work, because pearl diving always has in it the element of gambling. One may work a whole day and find only pearls of small value, and then perhaps bring up a fortune in an hour. The most beautiful pearl I ever saw was found in the waters at Bahrein some ten years ago, and was sold for ten thousand dollars. It must have been to such a fortunate pearl diver that Browning referred in his verses :

> "There are two moments in a diver's life :
> One when, a beggar, he prepares to plunge,
> Then when, a prince, he rises with his prize."

The time for pearl diving is from May until the end of September. During the winter months the cold weather interferes with the work, and the men live inshore. Then it is that they come in crowds to our hospital, and we have the joy of preaching to them from the parable of the Pearl of great price, and no audience appreciates a sermon on that text as much as the men who know what it costs to bring up the pearls. You remember the parable : "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls, and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had and bought it." When we tell the Arabs that the Pearl

of great price was the kingdom of God, peace and righteousness and joy, which Jesus Christ purchased for us at the cost of His own life and now offers freely to all who will believe in Him, they understand something of the message.

Will you not pray for the pearl divers of Bahrein that many of them may find the Pearl of great price, and that their humble homes,—mat-huts along the shore of the great sea—may be made glad by the joy of a Christian civilization and the knowledge of our Saviour? It is not hard to love them for their own sake, and I well remember many a happy hour spent with them in their boats or sitting on the beach, talking over their work. Sir Edwin Arnold referred to them in these lines:

> "Dear as the wet diver to the eyes
> Of his pale wife, who waits and weeps on shore,
> By sands of Bahrein in the Persian Gulf;
> Plunging all day in the blue waves; at night,
> Having made up his toll of precious pearls,
> Rejoins her in their hut upon the shore."

XII

A PIONEER JOURNEY ON THE PIRATE COAST

IT was on Saturday morning, February 9, 1901, that Elias, our colporteur, and I started for a journey along the eastern coast of Arabia, and, as we hoped, inland. Our expectations of a long camel journey and the sight of villages not yet marked on the map between the coast and Muscat were disappointed. But the result was a journey of 440 miles and more along the coast to the rocky cape that guards the narrow entrance to the Gulf. Our experiences were so interesting that I will relate some of them to you.

Did you ever read the droll story, "Three Men in a Boat"? Well, we were eleven men in a boat, not to speak of a fine Arab horse and a yelping greyhound, presents from the Ruler of Bahrein to the Ruler of Abu Thabi. Our boat was of the usual native style without any cabin or even an awning, and measured twenty feet across the beam and fifty from bowsprit to poop. The noble quadruped had the largest share of the scanty space midships; the dog was confined to the forecastle lest prayers be impossible; for the Mohammedans believe that the dog is an unclean animal, and that it is impossible to pray in any place where a dog has walked or sat without first washing it. The two first-class passengers and their boxes were on the left side of the poop; the

crew slept, smoked, washed themselves, and ate their dried fish and rice anywhere; and the captain with a priest and a merchant squatted at our right. I will not weary your patience to relate how many days after we intended to start the sail was hoisted and we were off. One never expects a native sailing craft to leave until the three days of grace (and grumbling impatience) are twice over. But good Abdullah bin Kambar was not altogether to blame; two of his sailors ran away, and he had to look them up and urge them on board. With a fair, brisk wind filling the huge sail we were all happy to start and forgot the delays and our dried bread baked three days too early.

Our boat was bound for Abu Thabi, the first important town on the coast south. The wind continued favourable, and on Monday we were sailing between two islands, mere rocks and uninhabited except by a few fishermen during the season. A little further towards the mainland is the large island of Dalma, and there was a long dispute between the captain and the mate as to which island we were passing. When the words waxed warm between them my chart decided the dispute. This island is an old centre for the pearl-fishers, and every season there is a large gathering here of merchants and divers; a sort of market-place on the highway of the sea.

The weariness of five days and nights in the boat was relieved in many ways. There was opportunity to read and plenty of interruption.

We had our meals to cook and tried to fish with a line and hook ; once the captain hit a wild duck with his rusty gun, but although all helped to lower the boat and they pursued the wounded bird, she escaped. One day we saw a large shark, and that afternoon there were some good fish stories. At night the black slave Abdullah sat at the wheel and told stories as only a Negro-Arab can tell them ; stories of the new Arabian Nights, and of how an Arab sharper stole a favourite horse by putting the bridle on his own neck and having his mate run off with the horse ! Several times it was our turn to lead the conversation, and we had a splendid opportunity to give "line upon line and precept upon precept." One can judge at once of the ignorance and open-heartedness of the Arab sailors by the remark they commonly make after they have had a missionary or colporteur for passenger : "We had no idea that Christians were such decent folk and even prayed to Allah."

At three o'clock on Thursday afternoon we were in sight of Abu Thabi, or "father-of-the-gazelle." It was my first visit to this town, although Elias had been there before. We found the ruler kind, friendly and very intelligent. We were assigned to a large room in one of his houses, and during our stay of four days there was abundance of food sent to us from the ruler's table, and all our wants were supplied from his beneficence,—huge dishes piled with rice, steeped with gravy and crowned with several pounds of prime roast mutton, the whole

surrounded with dates and bread loaves, on a large circular mat, and washed down with perfumed water. We were never hungry.

When the dwellers in the mat-huts heard of the arrival of foreigners with a medicine chest and books our room was filled with the curious or the ailing from early dawn until after sunset. That is the only drawback to their kindness; the Arab idea of hospitality does not include the blessing of privacy for their guest. One is never left alone, and if you seek solitude they set you down as a magician, or delver into the hidden things of nature which are forbidden to all true believers. So we had to forego meditation, reading, and even the change of clothing until nightfall, after our long sea journey.

It was a queer crowd that collected in the court and filled our little room; a long row of Arabs sitting on the mats all around the four sides of the court. Most of them were Oman Arabs, but there was one priest from Mecca who had more to say than all the rest. He was a wanderer who wore a spotless white turban and a sneering smile. His present residence, he said, was on the Island of Kais, in the Gulf, and he lived as do all of his kind by teaching school and copying charms for the ignorant. We had some discussions and more quiet talks together after the crowd left. It was sad to hear from him what dense ignorance there is regarding our religion. The news of Queen Victoria's death had just reached there and the sage from Mecca told fabulous stories of how and

why Christians were ruled by women! Our sales of Scripture were not large, but there was a demand for other books. One poor but learned man brought a manuscript copy of Al Hariri (the Arabian Shakespeare) in exchange for other books.

We left Abu Thabi by sailing-boat for Debai, eighty miles up the coast in a straight line. The wind compelled us to go zigzag.

This place has become the metropolis of Western Oman, and in population, progress, commerce and architecture far surpasses all the other towns. Between Abu Thabi and Debai the coast is desert and neither date-tree nor hut is seen; so flat is the country that a hill two hundred feet high (the only landmark for sailors) is called "the High Mountain."

We did not tarry long at Debai, although we had a pleasant morning at the house of the ruler and met some Arabs from the interior. One of them said he was willing for a proper consideration to take me all the way across Arabia to Jiddah, the port of Mecca. In the afternoon we started selling Scriptures on the outskirts of the town and in a very short time the crowd collected. Women came with copper coins and bright boys brought their savings to purchase Gospels—in the language of our trade, "the true story of the Living Prophet Jesus." After we left Debai on donkeys two boys who were late ran after us and overtook us a mile from the town; they brought money and paid for three more books. The

captain of our boat took us to his house for breakfast on our arrival, and showed us some poetry his wife had written. She talked with us and seemed versed in the Koran ; we left her a Gospel.

From Debai to Sharkeh we rode on asses, and as our two chests were heavy they were put, one each, on the backs of two other asses ; the distance is about ten miles. At Sharkeh we met old friends and were glad that even after a previous visit we were welcomed. An Arab merchant showed us much kindness and offered us a shop with a prophet's chamber above it for rent. Since this visit our missionaries often come here. From Sharkeh we crossed over to Lingah, and thence back to Bahrein by the mail steamer, but Elias went on visiting Ajman and the villages beyond all the way to Ras-el-Jebel, which means "the top of the mountain." The Arabic version of the seventy-second Psalm gives the promise in this way : "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth on Ras-el-Jebel ; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon."

XIII

ACROSS THE DESERT OF OMAN

OMAN is a little peninsula that sticks out eastward from the big peninsula of Arabia, and it might almost be called an island. On three sides are the waters of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, and on the west is the great sea of sand which the Arabs call the "empty abode," and which has never been crossed by any traveller as far as we know. The Arabs themselves are afraid to venture beyond the limits of the oases that touch its borders, and on all the maps of Arabia this desert is marked "blank and unexplored." Because the people of Oman for centuries past lived on such an island with the sea on one side and the desert on the other, they are quite distinct from the other Arabs. The language they speak has a peculiar accent, and their religion, although they are Mohammedans, is in many respects different from that of the other parts of Arabia.

I want to tell you of two journeys taken across this province. Many others have been made since, and our medical missionaries can now visit all the villages in the mountains back of the coast. On May 9, 1900, a colporteur and I put our two chests of books and medicines on board a small sailing-boat, and at four o'clock the wind was favourable to leave Bahrein harbour. We intended

to visit the pirate coast, and thence, if the way proved open, to cross the horn of Oman to Muscat, overland.

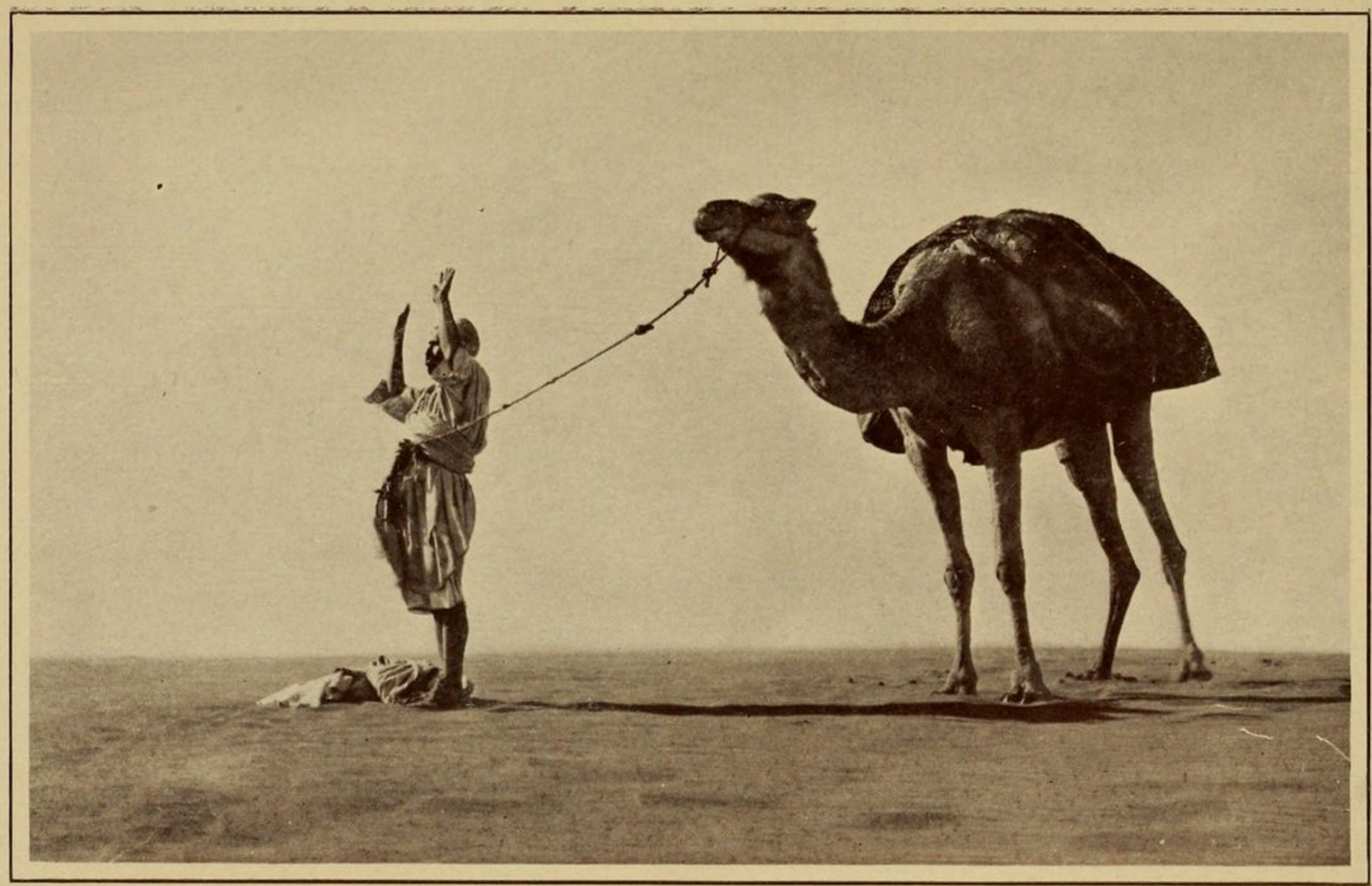
The captain and crew of our boat were all strict Moslems, and made no secret of the fact that formerly they were slave-traders. Crossing by zigzag lines to the Persian coast to avoid shoals and catch the wind, we reached Bistana and then sailed across the Gulf direct for Sharkeh. Half-way across is the little island of Abu Musa, with a small Arab population, but splendid pasturage, good milk and water. The chief export is red oxide, of which there are two hills with a boundless supply. Steamers occasionally call here for this cheap, marketable ballast; we left our witness in the shape of Arabic Gospels.

On May 14th we reached Sharkeh, the chief town on the pirate coast. Formerly this entire region was noted for the savage ferocity of its inhabitants. Thanks to English commerce and gunboats, these fanatic people have become tamed; most of them have given up piracy and turned to pearl-diving for a livelihood; their black tents and rude rock dwellings are making room for the three or four important towns of Sharkeh, Debai, Abu Thabi, and Ras el Kheima. We found the Arabs rather hospitable, and quite willing to hear our message. The mat-hut, set apart for our use, we for seven days made dispensary and reception-room. Here over two hundred Arabs came to get medicines, buy books, or discuss the reason of our errand. Many were the quiet talks during

those days with all sorts and conditions of Arabs. There was often no rest until long after sunset; and no sooner had the muezzin called to daylight prayer than the visitors began to walk in again. They were a pleasant lot of people, and more sociable than the Arabs of Yemen, while less dignified than those from Nejd.

We heard on every side that travelling in the interior of Oman was safe, so, after bargaining with camel-drivers, we secured two companions and five camels to take us to Sohar for the sum of twenty *rials* or Arabian dollars. At 9 P. M. on May 20th we left, and after a short rest at midnight to water the camels, marched until nine o'clock the next day. By going as much as possible by starlight to avoid the heat, and resting during the day under some scraggy acacia tree or in the shadow of a Bedouin fort, we completed the distance of ninety odd miles in a little over four days. A large part of the way we took was desert, with no villages or even nomad booths; the more usual route by Wady Hom being a little unsafe, we followed Wady Hitta.

Sometimes our caravan would pass a camel's skeleton bleached by the torrid sun. When a camel grows foot-sore or breaks down, there is no alternative: the poor beast is left to die in the wilderness. The second day we passed villages and cultivated fields; that night we spread our blankets on the soft sand, surrounded by thousands of sheep and goats, driven in by Bedouin lasses from their mountain pastures. Even among these shep-



Prayer in the desert

herds we found readers, and the colporteur sold books wherever the camels halted long enough to strike a bargain. It was late on Wednesday, May 23d, that we entered the narrow pass of Hitta. Our guides preceded, mounted, but with rifles loaded and cocked; then followed the baggage camel, to which mine was "towed," and in similar fashion my companion on the milch camel followed by its two colts. We were not troubled with the heat at night, but during the day it was intense, and it was refreshing to come to an oasis (common in this part of Oman) where water burst from a big spring, and trees and flowers grew in luxury. In the mountainous parts of Oman the roads run almost invariably along sandy watercourses or deep, rocky ravines. Tamarisks, oleanders, euphorbias, and acacias are the most common trees and shrubs. Where the country appears almost barren, we were surprised to find a considerable population of shepherds and goatherds. Their dwellings are mere oval shanties constructed of boulders or rocks. In the fertile valleys the population always centres in villages, and scarcely ever is a dwelling found at any distance from this common centre.

Just at the top of the pass of Hitta is the village 'Ajeeb, rightly named "wonderful." The view down the mountains over the fertile stretch of coast called the Batinah and out over the boundless Indian Ocean was grand. We descended to the sea, and the turbulent mountain stream, so cold to our bare feet as we waded it in the early dawn,

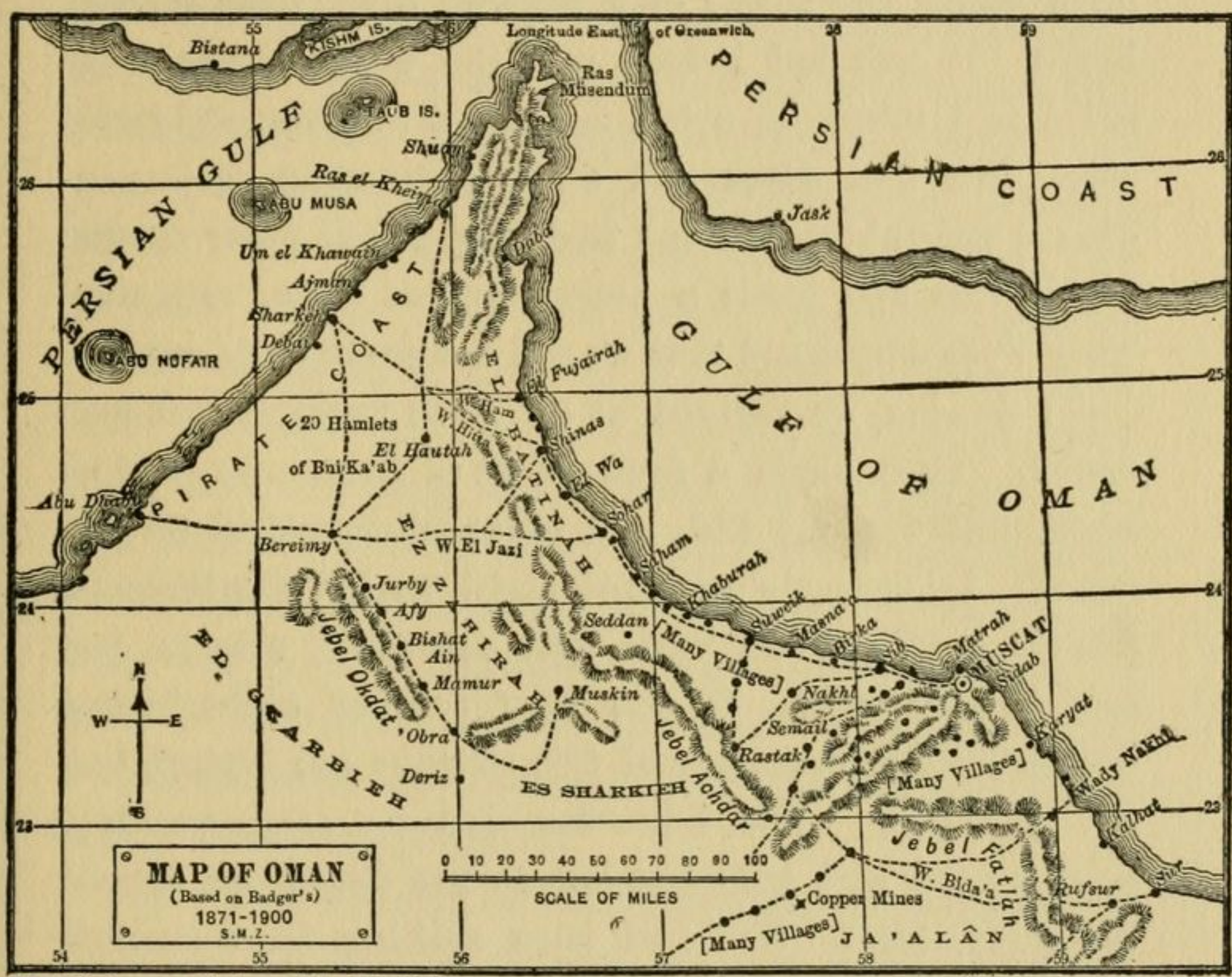
dwindled to a brook, and at last ebbed away along the beach a tiny stream of fresh water. These perennial streams are the secret of a coast fertile for nearly a hundred and fifty miles.

At Shinas, on the sea, we spent a hot day. The mosque was our pulpit and salesroom. One graybeard took us to his hut after noonday prayer to offer us simple hospitality. He spoke with fervour of my brother, Peter J. Zwemer, who came to his village three years previous. From Shinas our camels took us to Sohar. At the large village of El Wa we were unable to stop, as the camel-men were afraid of smallpox, which was prevalent there. Every one we passed on the way was friendly to a remarkable degree. The women brought fresh milk and fruit to us ere we dismounted, and the boys, instead of mocking the strange foreigners, *salaamed*, delighted to hear that in spite of our appearance we spoke Arabic. Not one copper did we spend for food and lodging ; it is the land of large-hearted hospitality. To help a sick child or give quinine to some ague-tormented Arab was to them a large return for their kindness to a "son-of-the-road."

My second journey across the northern horn of Oman was made in May, 1901, with the same travelling companion ; and sailing from Bahrein to Abu Thabi we went straight east to the coast of Oman and then along its shores all the way to Muscat by camel. It was the longest camel journey that ever I made, and when I reached

Muscat I was convinced that the camel is not only the ship, but the hardship of the desert.

The town of Abu Thabi from which we started is situated on a sort of island formed by the back-water of its



The Missionary Review of the World"

harbour. A chasm about two hundred yards wide, and even at low water, four or five feet deep protects the town against desert invasion, and a fort has been built close to this water barrier. After our camels had waded through the water breast deep and nearly soaked our luggage, we began the desert journey. For three hours

the road was as level as a table and equally barren; then we passed some outcropping rocks called the devil's castle. All that day and the next we rode through sandy deserts with scarcely any vegetation, resting at noon under the shade of a blanket roped over our two boxes. It was hot indeed, and the water in our water skins had taken on a bad taste after the long and jerky ride. We had dates and made some soup from condensed vegetables, but the Bedouins of our party caught big lizards and made a boiled mess of them, with rice. They were displeased that we did not share their meal.

On Sunday we arrived at an Arab encampment and rested. They made a feast for us of fresh milk, and at night killed a fat kid, and made cakes baked on hot ashes. At nine o'clock that night we left our Bedouin friends, and rode on until past midnight, always due east by the stars. It was very cold at night in the desert. These extremes of temperature are trying, but not unhealthy. The following day we came across a poor nomad girl who was lost in the desert and nearly dying of thirst. She had been seeking for a strayed camel, and had then missed all traces of the road herself. For two days she had been alone in the desert, and had almost given up hope. Our guide gave her some water and dates and showed her the nearest way to the encampment. All this stretch of country as far as Bereimy is a wide wilderness of sand for miles and miles in every direction; not level sand, but sand in big folds and

billows a hundred feet high, that change with every storm.

It was a delightful change to reach the oasis of Bereimy with its seven villages, joined by streams of fresh water, and date plantations, as well as high mango trees and gardens of vegetables. Beyond this oasis the mountain road passed numerous villages to Obri and Dank. We took the shorter road through Wady-el-Jazi, direct to Sohar. The Arabs in this part of the world are perpetually at war with each other. Everybody gets up armed and goes to bed with a rifle by his side. Even little boys carry a dagger in their belts, and old men will part with anything rather than their shotguns. We met with no mishap by the way, however, and reached Sohar safely, but we did not go to Muscat by sea because there was no wind. Instead we encouraged each other to stick to our rough camel saddles for four days more, which made the entire distance from Abu Thabi to Muscat nearly three hundred miles.

The whole country is most interesting. In spite of continual warfare, the peasants seem to find time to cultivate every fertile spot, and raise all sorts of crops. We saw barley, wheat, sesame, vegetables and even tobacco. In one village we rested on the wide threshing floor where the old-fashioned instrument with sharp teeth, of which the Bible speaks, lay idle. The Oman plow is much better than those in North Arabia. There they plow with a crooked stick, whose sharp prong

is strong enough to break up the sandy loam, but in this mountain region the peasants make a real coulter of iron and fit it to a heavy frame, braced to an upright handle of three bars set at right angles. The dress of the men and women is quite distinct from that in other parts of Arabia, and their houses are built like castles. Nearly every well is protected by a fort, and villages only a mile or two apart often carry on war with each other for many, many years. This is the chief obstacle to travel in the hill country of Oman.

Before you forget our journey across this part of Arabia, I want you to think of an Arab praying in the desert. One of the names the Arabs give to the desert is the "Garden of Allah," because they say there is nothing but God; no other life, or sound or scene to distract one's attention; only the great blue vault above, without a cloud, and the wide stretch of sand and rock all around the horizon. No wonder that the desert has been God's training school for many of His prophets and teachers. Think of Moses, and Elijah and Paul and Christ.

XIV

JAIL-BIRDS

DID you ever hear of missionaries who were jail-birds? Well, that has been my experience. This is how it was.

The day after Christmas about ten years ago it was decided that we make a tour to the mainland of Arabia from the island of Bahrein, our station. The picnic basket was packed with fresh bread and canned meats and good things, and we also took along extra clothing, a box of books and some medicines for the people. Our Arab servant had a hard time of it to secure a boat that would take us over because the people were still suspicious of Christians and were not at all anxious to have them begin work in new places. After a boat had been secured whose captain was willing for a good consideration to allow Christians to travel with him we still waited. When one travels by native boat in Arabia there is always delay; it may be a couple of hours or it may be a few days. Time and tide and the Arab temper are equally unreliable in the Persian Gulf. It is no use fussing and getting impatient. That only makes the Arab more immovable.

At four o'clock a small boat came as close to the shore as the water would allow, and then we rode out on donkeys through the surf to the tossing boat, and in this small

"jolly-boat" we were taken to the native ship where we settled on the poop-deck with all our belongings. The deck of this little sailing craft did not measure more than six feet by four, and so we had to sit close or we would fall overboard. The man at the tiller can manage on three or four square inches of room, and his bare toes cling to the edge of the boat just like a monkey on the bough of a tree. The sail was hoisted and away we went for about three hours. Then the wind dropped and we were becalmed almost in sight of shore until the next morning. After prayers at daybreak the sail was again hoisted, and the awkward paddle oars which the Arabs use were taken out to help increase the speed. Finally, after a severe struggle we arrived at our destination.

The pretty little town of Darain stood out clearly in the bright sunlight, and we were glad that at last we were to reach the mainland of Arabia. I was the first Christian woman that had ever landed on this part of the coast. There was a ride through the shallow water of about a quarter of a mile, and our Arab host was kind enough to send out a choice of vehicles for my use,—a chair, a horse and a donkey. I chose the donkey as the safest and mounted and splashed through the surf to the land. The rest of our party followed. We were then conducted to the guest chamber in the tower,—a large airy room with about twenty window frames and no windows, only shutters; so that when the wind blew the dust from the desert, the wooden shutters were fastened, and the light

and air had to be shut out also. Our host was very cordial and laid no special restraint upon us, although he too was suspicious that we had come to begin missionary work in earnest in his village,—a thing which he would not allow. He treated us royally and with genuine Arab hospitality, but yet his suspicion was evident because he kept us away from another guest of his, the Turkish governor of Katif, as he did not wish him to know that he had friends among the Christians. After three days of entertainment we went on board our boat again on the way to Katif. We landed there in a few hours but found ourselves in a real "hornet's nest." Our very best and most winning smiles could not melt the harshness of the custom-house officials. They said our passports were not properly made out, and the motion was soon made and carried that we should be returned whence we came at once.

Fortunately, there was no boat ready to take us back, and it was not our intention to be turned back without at least attempting to dispose of some of the Gospels which we had brought with us and to win the confidence of some of the people. We were not despondent because even in this inhospitable place there was a man who was anxious to receive us and who invited us to come and stay at his home. We were so happy for a few brief hours. The man's wife prepared a guest meal and received us very courteously. They gave us a well-furnished room and we were delighted to see that this Moslem

was already a Bible reader, for in one of the alcoves of the room was a well-thumbed New Testament.

But no sooner did we begin to unpack our things than a gruff voice from below called for us to come down immediately and bring all our belongings. A lank-looking individual, who said he was a police agent, compelled us to follow him, and so we went through narrow, dirty alleys and smelling streets, and were finally conducted into the courtyard of a large tumble-down house, the steps all crumbling and indescribably filthy. After struggling up the steep, irregular stairway, we were shown into a small room in a part of the house quite by itself, which opened out on to a small roof. It had no windows and only one dingy door.

A smoky lamp without a chimney was brought in which lit up the darkness but also showed the dirt. Many generations of men and *insects* had lived there, and marked up every space on the walls. When we protested and said we preferred to stay elsewhere, we were told to remain; that we were prisoners, and that we were not permitted to go to any other place. While my husband was led off to the governor by himself I waited. It took him over an hour to try to persuade the great official to allow us liberty, but it was all to no purpose. We must remain in these lodgings which he had provided. There were soldiers on each landing, he told us, and they were warned to protect us and not to let us pass out. So we settled down to the inevitable. The kind Arab from

Bedouin Women and their Children

Darain was also in Katif, and later on in the evening he brought the jail-birds some quilts and rugs to make them a little more comfortable. We did our best to rest, but it was almost impossible, and we were glad to see the first streak of dawn. Determined not to stay in the house any longer, we prepared a meal from our lunch basket, packed our few belongings and started to find our way to the street. The ragged individuals called soldiers murmured as we passed but did not stop us and we were out in the road and some distance from the governor's house when our servant whom we had not seen until now came after us and said we must not go ; that the governor wanted us and wanted us at once.

I began to protest, but was finally persuaded to return and to my great surprise was conducted into a room gorgeously furnished where a nice-looking meal was being set on a small table. The governor arose and received us very politely, inquiring after our health and comfort. We swallowed our wrath and told him in the best Arabic possible that we were quite well and hoped his lordship was also. He then invited us to breakfast and would not accept a refusal. We wondered what would happen next. After we had explained our errand and stated our desire to sell books to the people and talk to them about religion, he said he would permit us to stay with the custom-house officer, but that we must not distribute or sell a single book and that a soldier must go with us wherever we went. It was his belief that the people might do us harm

unless we were well guarded, and that as they had never before seen Christians it was entirely unsafe for us to distribute books or sell them among Mohammedans as fanatical as those in this part of Arabia. Thanking him for his kindness and accepting his apologies for keeping us as jail-birds during the night, we left his rooms and started walking through the streets. A soldier guard followed us, but when we refused to pay them for their service as guards and guides, they turned their backs and went away. And so in this land of misrule and intolerance, this uttermost province of the Turkish Empire, we were once more free.

XV

THE ACORN SCHOOL

TO the American schoolboy a Moslem school and school-books would appear the dullest things possible. Yet the Arab boys do enjoy school for there is always something to distract the attention, especially if the teacher is a shopkeeper. While a customer bargains, or the water carrier passes, or the coffee-house man brings the daily "cup of cheer," or, in the case of a woman teacher, callers come, all eyes and ears are open not towards the lesson but the conversation and the sights.

The earliest and *only* text-book is the Koran or portions of it cheaply lithographed on common paper. There are no pictures in their primers, for a Moslem tradition says that Mohammed cursed all who would paint or draw men and animals. There is neither singing nor prayer when school opens. Mohammed said, "Singing or hearing songs causeth hypocrisy to grow in the heart even as rain causeth corn to grow in the field." The school has no special building, but may be in the corner of a mosque or in the yard of the teacher; or part of his shop (if he is a merchant) will form the schoolhouse. There is no furniture except mats and folding bookstands. These look like tiny sawbucks. The schoolmaster sits amongst his

boys on the floor, and they all drone out their lessons together. There are no grades, neither is there order in the schoolroom. One lad may be at the alphabet; another one as far as counting numbers; a third child may be spelling out the first chapter of the Koran, while others are reading from the middle of the book at the top of their voices. The education of a boy should begin at the age of four years, four months and four days. On that day he is taught to say the Bismillah, or opening chapter of the Koran. Soon after that he may be sent to one of the day-schools to learn the alphabet.

When a boy has finished the reading of the whole of the Koran for the first time and has learned the rudiments of writing, he graduates from the primary school. On this occasion he has a rare holiday. Dressed in fine clothes, perhaps mounted on horseback, he visits the neighbours, receives gifts and sweetmeats and brings a handsome present to his tutor. If he does not intend to become a doctor of divinity or of herbs, this is the end of his school-days, and the lad is put to learning a trade or helping his parents.

As to moral training, tradition commands pious Moslems to teach the boy of seven to say his five daily prayers; at the age of ten, if he omits them they are to admonish him by blows. Boys are taught early the proprieties of conversation and behaviour according to Oriental etiquette. They are also taught the ceremonial washings and the correct postures for devotions. But

A Meccan Boy

purity of conversation and truth are seldom taught by precept, and never by example.

Writing is taught on a wooden slate or in copy-books made by the teachers. Slates and slate pencils are practically unknown, and the youngest child begins with a reed pen and ink. Caligraphy is not only a science, but the chief fine art in that part of the world which abhors painting, statuary and music. To write a beautiful Arabic hand is the height of youthful scholarly ambition.

A country that has only such schools cannot progress; and so the missionaries open schools with a broader course of study and with better training for the mind and heart.

The first Christian school in East Arabia was opened in 1899 on the veranda of the old mission house overlooking the sea. The little children of Ameen who was in prison for his faith were living with their mother in our house, and they needed to be taught; two of the rescued slave boys from Muscat, who had come to help in the housework, had some spare hours in the morning, and it was better for them to study than to sit around doing nothing, for Satan finds an awful amount of mischief for idle hands to do in Bahrein, and so the little school was started for the children in the house. We gave it the name of the "Acorn School" in faith that as "tall oaks from little acorns grow," so some day education in Arabia would be what it is now in America. We had lessons for two hours each morning, marching, singing, etc., for the little ones,

baby Bessie lying on the couch near by while the children were being taught; others wished to join, but neither accommodations nor strength would allow us to enlarge our borders at that time.

After some months an Arabic teacher was assigned to the station to teach a new missionary the language, and about that time we moved into a larger house. Then our numbers increased, and one of those early pupils was a young Jewish girl; another was a Jewish boy, who remained about three years, and was always a docile and clever pupil in English and Arabic; he has a complete Bible in Arabic, which they read in his home. The girl was a great help to us in every way—first in school, and later in the hospital; she is quite a changed girl and a superior one, and we trust the day will come when she will openly confess Christ and follow Him. Some grown-up lads were among those first scholars, and they came to learn English. One of the older boys was such an apt pupil that he was taken on the staff of the English Political Agent as interpreter for the Persians; another advanced so far that he is able to buy and sell for the wholesale business, and for this reason is a great help to his father, a merchant in Bahrein. These boys have learned much of the truth along with their English, and neither of them now believe that the sun sets in a pool of black mud!

The reflex influence of the school is felt even in their homes, changing some of the habits and language. Some

of those early scholars have gone to the Eternal Home. Quite a number of the missionaries and native helpers have helped from time to time in this school, for when one left, another would take up the work. The last few years the girls have been doing needlework and learning how to make their own clothes neatly.

There are a great number of Christians and Jews, but the greater number in good weather are Moslems, and in the cool season the little room is overcrowded, and one teacher is very busy trying to keep all employed. The school is still in the initial stage, but it has proved its right to exist, and when we look into the brightening faces of those who gather to be taught, and listen to the Scripture portions repeated and the hymns spiritedly sung, we can only say: "What hath God wrought!" To outsiders the school may seem a small thing, but to us, who have watched its slow growth, it is encouraging. The teaching has always in view the honour of Christ in a land where His title, "Son of God," is disputed.

If you could see our new school building you would know how much better off the children are who come to the Christian school than those who still attend the native schools. The rooms and the seats, and windows through which glorious sunshine and light shine, the blackboards and maps and pictures all help to educate through "eye gate." The boys and girls are graded and separated, for coeducation is not yet a good thing in Arabia. When I taught in the school I used to surprise the girls occasion-

ally by bringing to school some little treat of fruit, dates or candy; and I wish you could have heard their hearty "Thank you" and listened to them as they left the yard and went over the desert to their houses, singing at the top of their voices in Arabic Christian hymns which they had learned in school. They thought it would please me and impress us with their goodness. And it was good to hear these girls and sometimes small boys singing "My Faith Looks up to Thee," "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know," etc. And even if they did not understand the deep meaning nor enter into it, it gave them pleasure to sing the bright tunes. And while they sang, they were out of mischief at least. It was so new for these Moslem girls to have any one to care anything about them.

XVI

THE STORY OF A ROLLER BANDAGE

THE day was very hot, and I was very tired. The flies were buzzing thick around me and it was impossible for me to keep awake over the book which slipped from my fingers and fell on the floor. I stretched myself for one of those delightful noonday naps which, in spite of the heat and the flies, revive the life of the missionary and make him ready for the work of the afternoon, and as I slept, I dreamed a dream.

I was walking up towards the mission hospital, when what should I see coming down the steps but a roller bandage, walking along as happy as could be, and after exchanging the usual Arab greeting of "Salaam," he told me this story :

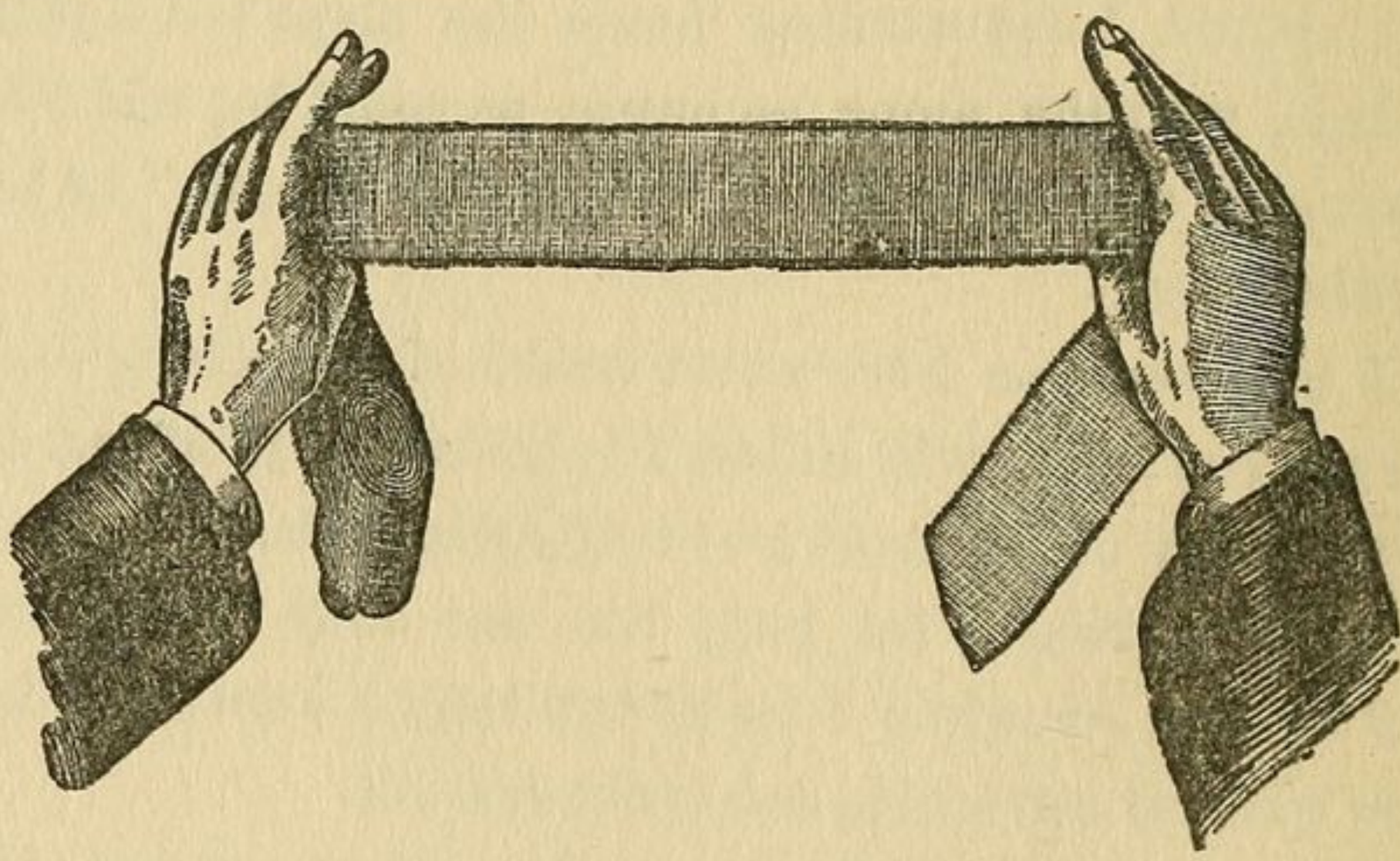
"I suppose you have never heard of me before, and I am sure you never will unless I introduce myself and unroll the story of my short but interesting life.

"A little, round, fat body like me may have a long story to tell ; for when I lie at full length I measure four yards without stretching the truth one bit.

"It is only six months ago, as far as I remember, that I was part of a fine new piece of white muslin in the store window of a merchant, and had no name or place or

mission of my own in this big world. One day the salesman reached out and took the piece of muslin down. It was sent with a lot of other purchases to the home of a lady (I think her name was Phœbe or Dorcas) greatly interested in foreign missions.

"The next thing I knew, the willing hands and deft fingers of a band of little folks tore me from my seven sisters and rolled me up so snug and tight that none would imagine I was only a strip of cloth. And then, when a bright new pin was stuck on my breast, really I began to feel quite important. The following day I was put into a pasteboard box with three dozen other roller bandages, and I remember hearing a short prayer, just as they tied down the cover, that God would bless us on our errand of mercy to dark Arabia.



"Time would fail me to tell of the days we spent in the basement of the building of the Board of Foreign Mis-

sions, waiting to be put in our corner of a big box, and of all the interesting things I learned from those who spoke about the heathen and Mohammedans while they were packing supplies for the various mission fields. You know I never knew there were so many doctors and nurses, and so many hospitals and dispensaries—not to speak of schools and other things under the care of our Board.

"Finally, the box that was to be my prison house for two long months was tumbled into a dray and taken to the North River pier. There they lifted us into the dark hold of a ship; the sailors fastened down the hatches; the whistle blew, and we were off for the long voyage.

"Being a roller bandage from my earliest youth, I did not at all mind the motion of the vessel; but some of the dolls and picture cards were all upset.

"When we reached Bombay we were transferred with a great deal of unnecessary noise to another ship bound for the Persian Gulf. I remember that I was curious to know at which port of the Gulf I would disembark. One of the biggest roller bandages said *he* knew, for he had heard the New York lady tell the children that these bandages were for the Mason Memorial Hospital at Bahrein, Arabia. All were not agreed.

"A many-tailed bandage said he thought we were going to Busrah to help in the dispensary there, but a T bandage, which has three ends to it and is shaped like a big letter

T, contradicted him, and there came near being a quarrel. The little bandages, however, with one accord smoothed it over by saying: 'Wait and you will see.'

"The big roller bandage was right. When the British India steamer entered Bahrein harbour with a large cargo of rice and tea and Manchester goods, the missionary boxes got mixed up with the rest, and were put over the ship's side into native boats.

"Such a hubbub and shouting! I knew we were among Arabs and in the land of Ishmael, although I could not understand one word of their strange language.

"From the cargo boat we were carried on the back of a donkey through the surf to the custom-house, and thence once again to the hospital. I cannot say I enjoyed the donkey ride. The boy who drove the beast had an awkward way of turning sharp corners in the narrow streets, and then the big packing case would bump hard against a stone wall, and give us an awful shaking.

"It was a relief to hear the voices of our new friends. Soon the box was opened, and we saw daylight once more. The sheets and blankets were put to immediate use in the general ward; the dolls put away for Christmas; while *we* were taken to the operating-room, and put behind glass doors on a shelf. Even though I was not an eye bandage, I could easily see that we were occupying the best room in the entire hospital, and I distinctly heard one of the ladies say: 'These bandages *are* fine.'

"You can imagine that we kept our eyes and ears open

after such a welcome. Well, it was rather monotonous, after all. Every day, nearly, the doctor had some sort of eye patient on the table, and consequently the eye bandages put on airs of great importance. We waited impatiently.

"One day a nurse came in suddenly and seized me by my throat and took me without ceremony to the general ward, a big room with twelve beds in it.

"On the stretcher, in the middle of the floor, lay an Arab, looking very untidy and weak, and in great pain. I heard his story. His name was Ahmed bin Haroon, and he was a poor fisherman from the distant village of Zillag. Zillag is one of those little struggling hamlets on the Island of Bahrein to which the missionaries occasionally make zigzag journeys, visiting the people to carry them Gospels or to invite the sick to the hospital. The day before, very early in the morning, while he was mending his nets and collecting his fish, a robber came, stabbed him twice in his abdomen, and taking the fish, ran away.

"The poor man had two nasty cuts, deep and dangerous, and I heard them say while cleaning the wounds that he would probably not live. Though he looked so ignorant and dirty, I really felt sorry for the poor fellow, and wondered if I could be of much help. After the doctor put on the dressings, my turn came. In fact, I had more turns than I have ever had since, all in the space of five minutes. Round and round that Arab they wound me close. But to see the look of gratitude on his face when,

in a clean shirt and on a nice spring bed, with me for company, he opened his eyes—well, it was worth the long journey, I can tell you. Over *our* bed there was a chart with No. 109, and the man's name on it. There were also curious zigzag lines drawn every morning and evening across the chart. The doctor put these lines there, for I saw him do it, after inserting a fever thermometer in the patient's mouth. I soon learned to know whether the line would go up or down by counting the heart-beats of my companion. Of course, being so close together, we learned to like each other, and I one day explained to him how the people away off in America had sent me as their little missionary for his comfort. On the opposite side of the ward there is a picture of Christ healing a blind man, which we used to look at.

"They prayed for No. 109 and read a little to him, but I am sure he understood what *I* told him much better. You see, until he got hurt he was very suspicious of Christians and believed all sorts of foolish things about them. Now he talked with the other patients and watched what was done for him, and felt *me* near him ; it was a new life for him. His condition became more hopeful every day ; I knew it by the way he began to enjoy his soup. Not that I was with him all the time myself. No ; the other roller bandages had their turn, and I heard the rest of the story from them. Ahmed bin Haroon was discharged nearly cured on the first day of the Moslem fast month. He came back after for a visit, and is going about his work

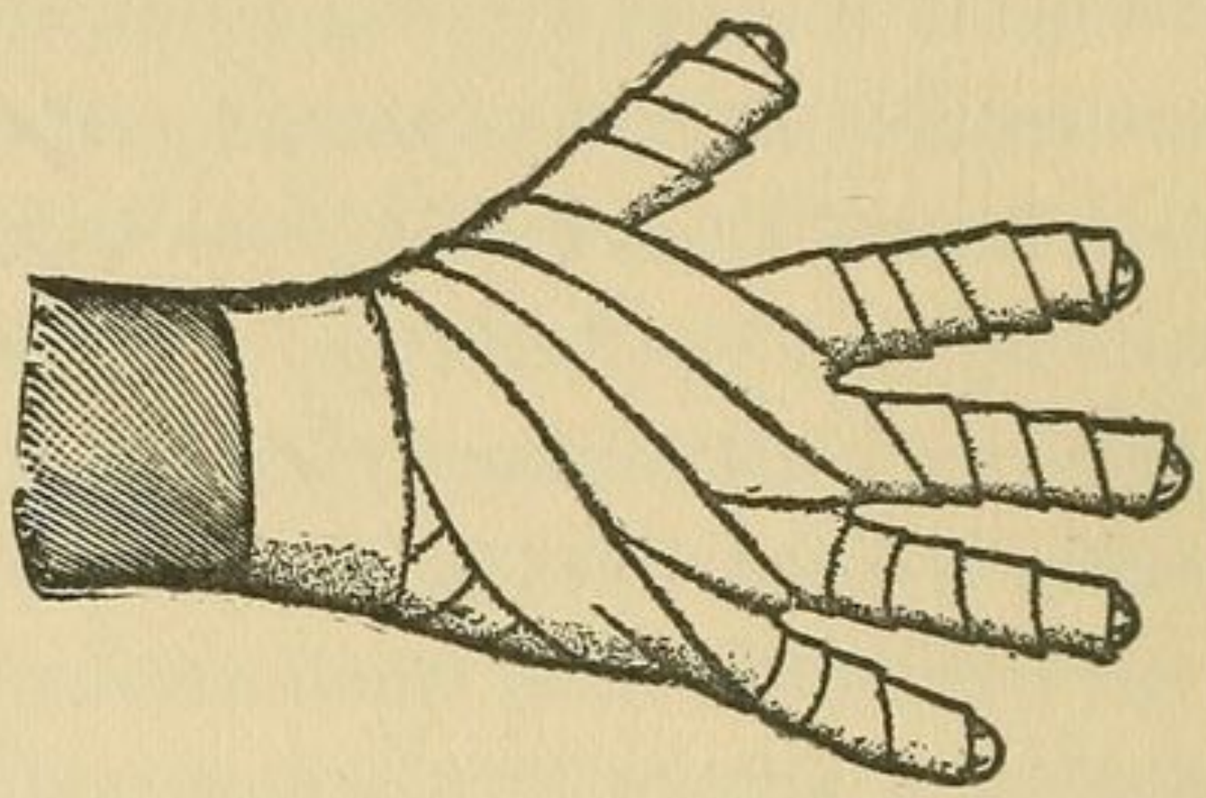
—the same fisherman. Only there is no telling how much he may think of what he saw and heard while he mends his nets at Zillag. And the missionaries are sure of a warm welcome in that village ever hereafter.

"The day I was taken off duty and said good-bye to my patient I met such a lot of bandages down-stairs in the surgery ; there seemed no end of them ! Of course, most of them were common, from the Bahrein bazaar, and unbleached, but they had good stories to tell, nevertheless. I heard it stated on good authority that over a thousand yards of bandages were used up in one month. And when I saw the number of men, women and children with ulcers and abscesses, sitting on the veranda that day, I did not doubt the fact. Only I wish I could have told it to that salesman in New York and to the kind lady. Then there would have been more of us ; for I am sure it is no trouble for the boys and girls to make rollers of us.

"My end was near. In spite of all that I had done for the hospital, the sweeper carried me out in a bucket, and then, without ceremony or apology, the whole pile of us were set on fire, and we went up in a chariot like Elijah."

He ended his story, and as I looked at him, I was just about to say : "How did you ever get back here out of the bucket and the fire to come and tell me your story ?" but when I began to speak, the bandage speedily disappeared, and so did the hospital, and I awoke from my dream. The hospital records, however, show how the story of the bandage is true in every particular.

"Oh, what can little hands do
To please the King of Heaven?
The little hands some work may try
To help the poor in misery:
Such grace to mine be given."



XVII

NAJMA'S LAST CHRISTMAS

OUR little Arab friend, Najma, was born a long distance from the place where last Christmas was spent. Bagdad is the city, you remember, where Sinbad the sailor lived, and in this very city on the old river Tibris Najma was born. Her father and mother were both good Moslems and she was their first-born child, and yet not very welcome, because all Moslems like to have boy babies and not girls. They gave her the name of Fatima after the daughter of Mohammed, their prophet. When she was afterwards baptized into the Christian faith with her mother the name Najma was given her which means a "star." Her father suffered much persecution for changing his religion, and when he was sent into exile far away from his home, she with her mother and brothers came down the river to Busrah and down the Persian Gulf to Bahrein. It was a long zigzag journey for them by flat-bottom river boat and ocean steamer, and then in the little harbour boat, tacking with the wind to shore.

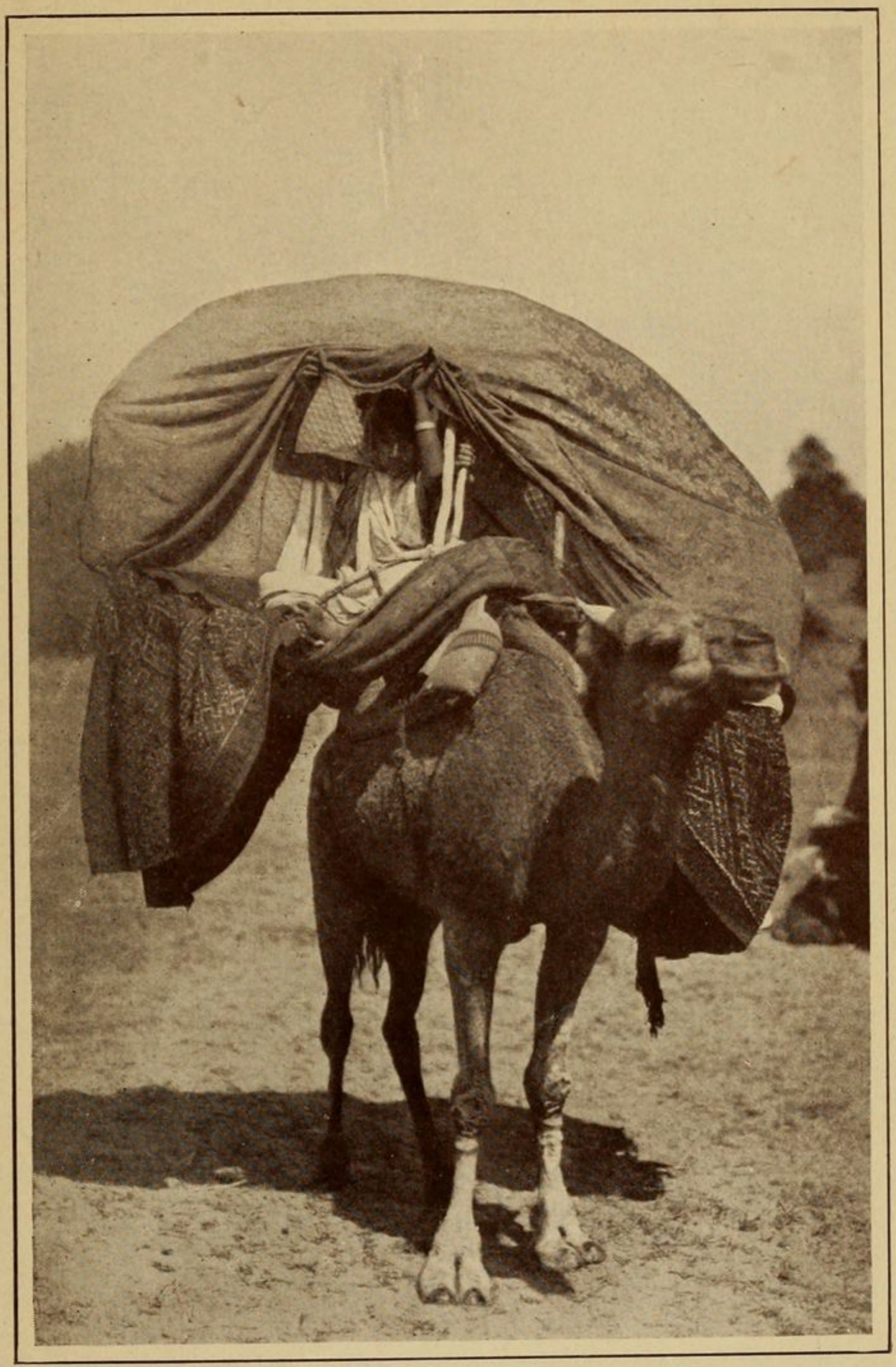
Until the family came to us they did not know what Christmas meant, and of course had never celebrated it. When her third Christmas came, and it was her last, it was still a fresh and joyful occasion to her, therefore, as it was to all of us in that lonely island and amongst our lit-

tle group of converts. Not only was it the last Christmas to Najma but for others in that company gathered to celebrate the birthday of our Saviour. Two other little voices that sang so sweetly

> "Where do all the daisies go?
> I know, I know!
> Underneath the snow they creep,
> Drop their heads and go to sleep.
> In the spring-time up they peep.
> That is where they go,"

were silent before the next Christmas came around. And then the mother of Najma who looked so strong and sat in the corner, interested so deeply in all the recitations and songs, with two others of that little company had gone Home before the end of the new year.

It was Najma's last Christmas, however, that I was going to tell about. We had been busy all morning decorating the little chapel in the hospital and getting the simple gifts all in order for the afternoon celebration. Najma had not been well for a few days, suffering with those attacks of fever that are so common in the Persian Gulf. When Christmas came we thought she would not be well enough to attend, but she begged so hard and was so sure that she would be all right that we sent around a donkey to her home; and when her mother had put on all her new garments, so bright and pretty, she rode to the hospital. Although she was weak, when she came with the other children she brightened up considerably and



A Bedouin Girl playing peek-a-boo on a camel

took a keen interest in everything, even helping to sing the Christmas carols. When the others had said their pieces, she insisted on saying hers and repeated beautifully the whole fifty-first Psalm. Then she waited until the refreshments were served—that most important part of a Christmas celebration—and afterwards wishing everybody a Happy Christmas she was placed on the back of the donkey and went home.

I wish you could have seen our Christmas tree on that occasion. It consisted of a number of palm branches tied together and the gifts were hung from the spikes of the branches,—presents old and new for all who came. Most people would have been surprised at the absence of dolls, but in Arabia these have to be given out sparingly and judiciously because some of the Moslems are too much afraid of idol worship to appreciate dolls in their homes. Therefore, we gave the children writing pads and pencils, books and toys, beads and new dresses, small bags of rice for the poorer scholars,—something for everybody. How joyfully each received his or her gift!

Najma gathered up all the little things given to her and kept them close by her side all the next day and took a great deal of pleasure in them; but in the evening of that day we were suddenly called out to see her and found her dying from heart failure following that week of fever. It was a surprise and a shock to us all. In spite of her faults those who knew her best could not help loving her. With tremendous difficulty she learned

to read the Gospel and was very proud of her attainment as it is only one girl in a thousand among the Arabs who can read. To lose such a bright little Arab girl seemed very sad at that time, but God makes no mistakes, and we are so glad that this little girl had such a bright Christmas as her last on earth. Think of the children who are in the hospital to-day, many of them for the first time in contact with Christians, and that some of them have never yet had their first Christmas in Arabia. There are many, many little girls in this neglected country who would enjoy a Christmas so much if only they knew as Najma did about the Babe born in a manger for their sakes. It is nineteen hundred years ago that He came to the world as its Saviour and yet there are so many countries where the boys and girls have not yet heard of His coming.

If we would win the whole, round world for Jesus we must tell His story all around the earth and give everybody a chance to read the story of His life. Do you remember those beautiful verses of Father Tabb in regard to the First Christmas?

> "A little Boy of Heavenly birth
> And far from Home to-day,
> Comes down to find His ball, the earth,
> Which sin has cast away.
> Come, comrades, let us one and all
> Join in to get Him back His ball."

XVIII

THOSE WHO HAVE NEVER HEARD

IF all Arabia is to hear the story of the Gospel, there are many zigzag journeys yet to be made. The country is much larger than most people imagine, and a great part of it is still unexplored. Fortunately the unexplored sections of the great peninsula are nearly all uninhabited as far as we know, but no one has been there to see or investigate. If you were to travel from New York to Chicago and back on a camel, the distance would be about as great as to cross Arabia once in its broadest direction. Topsy Turvy Land is three times as large as the state of Texas, the largest state in the Union. It is nearly as large as all British India, excluding Burma, and if you spread Arabia out on the map of Europe, without tucking in the corners, you could cover the whole of France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Austria, Servia, Roumania, and Bulgaria.

The population of this great stretch of country with its table-lands and deserts, its villages and encampments, is perhaps eight million ; and just as Arabia, with its four thousand miles of coast, has only three lighthouses for ships that pass in the night, so the light of the Gospel is shining in only a very few places along the coast, and hardly at all in the interior. At Aden, and Muscat, and

Bahrein, and Kuweit and Busrah, as well as along the rivers as far as Bagdad, there are lighthouses of the Gospel. Although only like little candles burning in the night, they can be seen from a long distance. Patients come for hundreds of miles to the hospitals, and when they go away, carry the gospel message for hundreds of miles back to their villages. And yet what are these few stations for so large a territory, and what can less than forty missionaries do among so many people?

When the great Missionary Conference met at Edinburgh in 1910 and the report was made on How to Carry the Gospel to all the non-Christian World, it stated that "Of the eight million inhabitants of Arabia, it is entirely safe to say that fully six million are without any missionary agency." One can travel from Bahrein across the mainland for 1,150 miles without meeting a missionary or a mission station, all the way to Aden. On the entire Red Sea Coast, as well as the south coast between Aden and Muscat, there is no mission work. Of the six provinces of Arabia, only three are occupied by mission stations. No one has ever preached the Gospel at Mecca, where Mohammed was born, or at Medina, where he lies buried, and although some ninety thousand pilgrims from every part of the Moslem world pass through Jiddah every year on their way to Mecca, this important city is still waiting for an ambassador of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps the most neglected class in this great neglected country are the Bedouins, or nomads. Like Ishmael of

old, "their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them." Hated alike by the town dwellers and the Turks, they are the roving gypsies of the Orient, and yet they are so numerous and so closely bound together by tribal ties that sometimes one can see their black tents spread out in vast encampments like a city of tabernacles in the wilderness.

It is a strange life these children of Ishmael lead, a life full of its joys and sorrows and desert hardships. Under the shadow of a black tent, or the shade of an acacia bush, or perhaps behind a camel, the Arab baby first sees the daylight. As soon as it is born, its mother gives it a sand-bath, and the father gives it a name. For the rest, it is allowed to grow up much as it pleases. Trained from birth in the hard school of fatigue and hunger and danger, the Bedouin children grow up saucy and impudent, but with cunning and a knowledge of all the ways of the desert and the life of the caravans.

The Bedouin children have no books nor toys. They play with dead locusts or dried-up camel's bones; they make whistles out of desert grass, and love to use the sling as David did, with pebbles from the brook when he killed the giant. The girls help in the hard work of drawing water, making butter and driving the camels to and from pasture. Although they cannot read, and have no picture books, they all of them study without ceasing the great picture book of nature, and their little dark eyes, whether watching the sheep at pasture, or counting

the stars in the blue abyss from their perch on the lofty camel saddle in the midnight journeyings, are never at rest.

In some parts of Arabia, Bedouin women when they travel ride on a camel saddle called a *howdij*, which protects them from the gaze of strangers. Sometimes they play peek-a-boo, as the camel trudges along. In many respects their life is most unhappy. Doughty and other travellers believe that over one-half of the nomad population seldom know the blessing of a full meal. When they hear from the lips of Western travellers of countries where there is bread and clothing and peace, and water in great abundance, they are surprised, and contrast the condition of other nations with their lives of misery. One of them, after listening to Doughty's description, threw his hands up, and uttered this prayer, "Have mercy, O Allah, upon Thy creature whom Thou createdst! Pity the sighing of the poor, the hungry, the naked. Have mercy, have mercy upon them, O Allah!" Who can help saying "Amen" to the nomad's prayer? We cannot judge them harshly when we remember that they have never had a fair chance, and that for centuries warfare and plunder have been their daily life. I remember with much interest a Sunday I spent in the black tents of Kedar, with a crowd of nomads sitting around. They were most hospitable, and brought in great wooden bowls of fresh milk, with butter floating in it, dried dates and bread baked on the coals; then, when our appetites were

satisfied, they listened, oh, so eagerly, as I told them for the first time the old, old story of Jesus Christ's birth, and death and resurrection. Some of them were so ignorant that they had never heard of a cross, and I remember taking two twigs from the ground and showing them how our Saviour was crucified for our sins, according to the Scriptures. No one has visited that tribe in Oman since my journey eight years ago. How long must they and others wait for Christian teachers? Shall the Bedouin babies have a better chance than their mothers had?

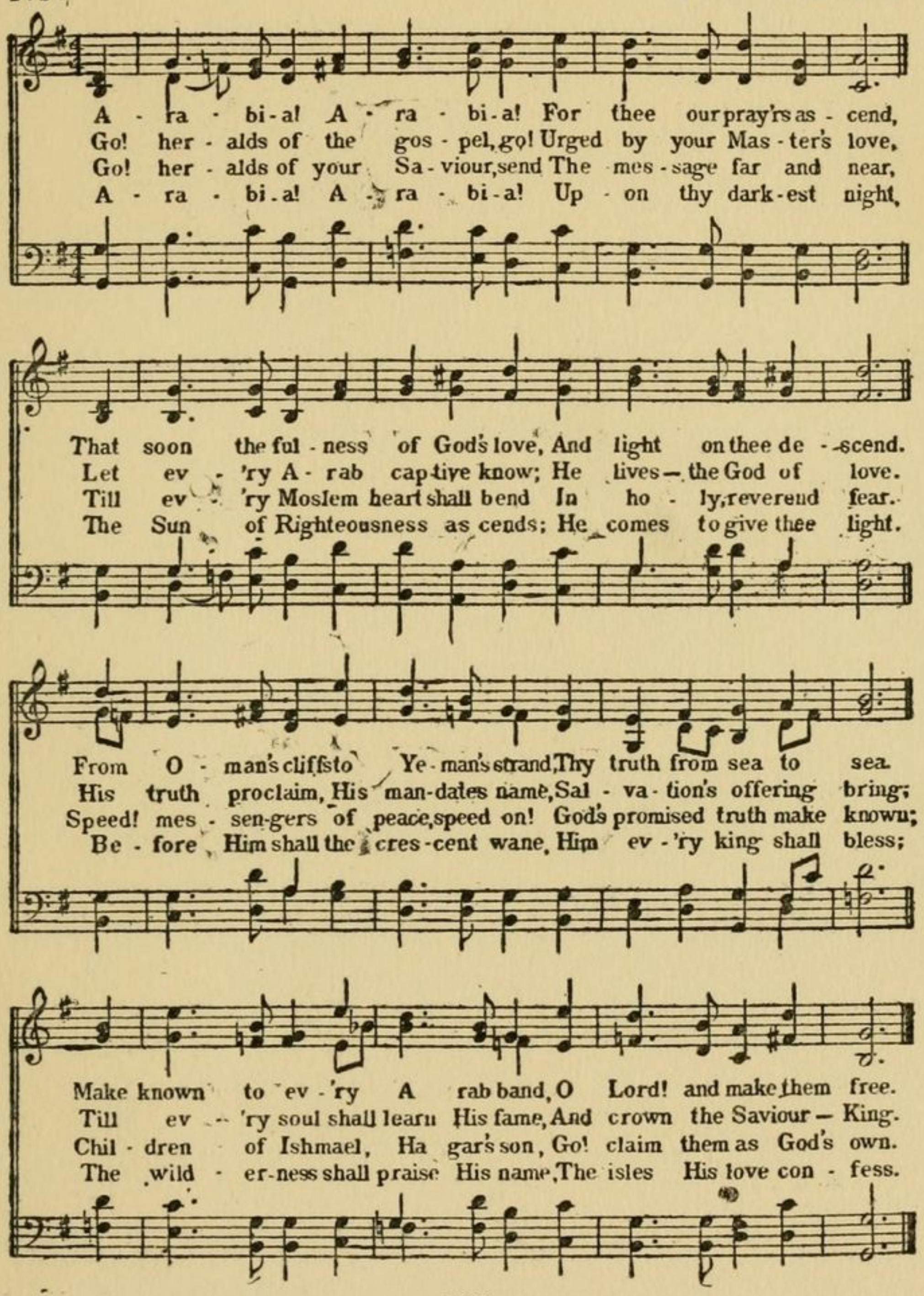
The kingdoms and governments of this world have frontiers which are guarded and must not be crossed without permission, but the kingdom of Jesus Christ has no frontier. It has never been kept within bounds. It has a message for the whole race, and the very fact that there are millions of people in the heart of Arabia who have never heard, becomes the strongest of reasons why we must carry that message to them. Difficulties and dangers should not hold us back. They did not hold back Jesus Christ when He made the long journey to our lost world. He depends on us to finish His work. As it is written:

> "They shall see to whom no tidings of Him came,
> And they who have not heard shall understand."

> "O Zion, haste, thy mission high fulfilling,
> To tell to all the world that God is Light;
> That He who made all nations is not willing
> One soul should perish, lost in shades of night.

"Publish glad tidings;
Tidings of peace;
Tidings of Jesus,
Redemption and release."

IN THE CAMEL COUNTRY
A R A B I A

ARABIA.

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