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# THE SYRIAN WORLD

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## IN THIS ISSUE

TO determine the degree of a people's progress, one must look to the home. The mother is the one to rear a nation. In the East, woman had been held down to straight jacket traditions forcing her to the strictest seclusion. She could not broaden and develop sufficiently to accelerate the march of progress. The East was man's realm exclusively.

Not so are conditions at present. Woman is emerging from her confinement and asserting herself in almost a radical manner. She is seeking education and already discussing political franchise. It's a sign of awakening that cannot fail of carrying a weighty portent.

The woman's movement in the East is a subject of fundamental importance. The whole question of national progress hinges on it. And Ameen Rihani discusses it in a most enlightening manner. In his present article he gives the whole history of the movement and cites many instances of its progressive and effective manifestation. Mr. Rihani's standing as an expert in Near Eastern matters is well-known.

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PROF. Charles D. Matthews  
of Birmingham Southern

College is an Arabic scholar of recognized ability. He visited Syria and the Near East last year and made a study of its social, political, educational and economic trends. His present contribution to *THE SYRIAN WORLD* on American educational institutions in the Near East is both informative and entertaining. We are happy to welcome him to our circle of contributors, and feel sure that our readers will immensely enjoy his writings, both in poetry and prose, inspired by the beauty of some wondrous scenes he beheld in our motherland.

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WE begin in this issue a serial of the nature of the famous Arabian Nights, and done in the same order. Ali Zaibaq, or Quicksilver, is one of those superhuman heroes created by the fertile Oriental imagination and around whose person are woven tales of the most wonderful exploits. The translation of Quicksilver was undertaken many years ago by the editor in collaboration with his friend Mr. Thaddeus S. Dayton. There was no thought at the time of publishing *THE SYRIAN WORLD*, and the manuscripts were forgotten. Lately, however, our loyal friend and

collaborator discovered us and learned of our work and generously turned over the long-buried literary treasure to us. We are now happy to pass it along to our readers. They will surely find it to be a real discovery.

**C**ONTINUING the description of his trip through Syria, the editor takes the reader in his present installment to the interior of the country, first on a pilgrimage to the tomb of Abu'l-'Ala, and then to a visit to Homs and Hama, the twin cities of the Orontes. Readers who have followed the editor's travel articles will find the current installment most interesting.

**T**HE Umayyad dynasty at Damascus saw the heyday of the power and glory of Islam. Yazid, a son of Mu'awiyah, succeeded to the throne of his father when most of the civilized world was paying tribute to the Prince of the Faithful in the capital of Syria. But the heart of Yazid did not crave pomp and power—he wanted love, and in the pursuit of his worldly pleasures he contemptuously neglected the affairs of state. Of such strength was his love that it killed him and gave him the distinction of being the only caliph to die of

love. How he lived and loved and died is graphically told in an exclusive translation from the Arabic original.

**T**HE Political Department in this issue is teeming with interest. Political developments in Syria are being watched by Europeans and Americans as never before because of the mandatory experiment. Surely these developments should hold more interest for Syrians and those of Syrian descent. They are treated in a concise and comprehensive manner in **THE SYRIAN WORLD**.

In this issue the supposed plottings of Italy to gain the mandate over Syria through the Papal Nuncio and the Maronite clergy are disclosed in all their details.

**T**HIS issue marking the entry of **THE SYRIAN WORLD** in its fifth year, an editorial on the subject surveys the past and promises a most important announcement to be published in the coming issue. Also discussed editorially is the advisability of a change of name for the Syrians in America. This subject should be of general interest and expressions of opinion on it would be welcomed if treated logically and dispassionately.



# THE SYRIAN WORLD

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VOL. V. No. 1.

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## Woman in the Near East

*By* AMEEN RIHANI

FROM the seclusion of the harim the women of the Near East are going out to the public school, to the open forum, to the dance-hall, even to the business world. The change, social and intellectual, is evident everywhere, from Turkey to Arabia and from Egypt to Afghanistan. There is also a European, a Western direction of significance. Eastern women attend women congresses in Europe, Western women travel in the East with a message and an appeal; and in both places they meet on common ground and exchange views and confidences. The status of woman, fashioned and upheld by man for centuries, must change.

But how fast is it changing in the Near East? There is Occidental speed in Turkey; there is a steady advance in Egypt; there is determination flavored with controversy in Syria; and there is in Arabia, Persia and Afghanistan a traditional caution highly spiced with the modern ambition. Everywhere there is a common urge, however, and an uncommon tendency to get together.

At the Woman Congress held in Damascus last June, were delegates from all the countries I have mentioned. And the speeches were made in languages that were not all Asiatic. The representative of an international organization for women in Europe spoke in French; the delegate from Persia delivered an address in English, and the head of the Turkish delegation made a gracious concession to Damascus in fluent Arabic. We may infer from this that the sources of inspiration are as vital as the points of convergence. Arabic, of course, was the common medium; and through Arabic, with English and French as the auxiliaries of its modern culture, the cardinal objectives of the woman move-

ment will eventually be achieved everywhere in the Near East.

These objectives, as expressed by the President of the Congress, are three, namely, monogamy, the right of a girl to choose her own husband, and the abolition of seclusion. Which means that polygamy and the veil and the harim are passing away.

They have already passed away in Turkey. The woman movement, in the most successful of Oriental republics, has in fact passed beyond the first stage of enfranchisement. It began where Sultan Abd'ul-Hamid ended and progressed slowly to the point that marks the beginning of Mustapha Kemal. Since then it has been going hastily through the most modern of economic and social experiments. The tempo, and not the spirit, has changed. In 1912 I heard a woman haranguing a crowd in one of the streets of Constantinople. She was the first woman to unveil in public, and after she had finished her speech, she waved her veil as a banner of freedom. Many women after that followed her example, and soon the eloquent gesture became superfluous.

It can not be said, therefore, that Mustapha Kemal is the author of the Turkish woman's freedom. He is its official protagonist and its guide. But what share and what trouble he may be having in guiding it, may be only inferred. The American School for Girls in Constantinople—now Istanbul—is still the principal factor in modern education; and from Pierre Loti's *Disenchanted* to the Dictator's *Disenchained* the path is checkered with the lights and shades of a European experiment.

The alluring is never all-curing. The daughters of the lethargic ladies of the harim must not only go to school, but they must also work. They must even be the mistresses, more or less, of their own destiny. Earn your living, find your own husband, solve your own domestic problems. Freedom's compensations are seldom free from freedom's heartaches.

How much the modern Turkish girl is beginning to feel this, can not be ascertained at this early stage of her enfranchisement. She is still in the glow of dawn; and encouraged by the Dictator, stimulated by his edicts, she is bravely going ahead. The publicists of the Republic are her prophets. The dogma of the mullah has been replaced by the dogma of the propagandist. But there are, for her diversion, playgrounds on the way. And there are dance-halls and beauty contests to keep up her spirit. There are also cafés where she may tarry to survey the masculine world or to be surveyed by it while she sips her drink and smokes her cigarette. Barbers, too, who but yesterday were poetic about the

unseen beauty of the hair they now consign to the litter basket. Alas for romance.

But the girl who read Pierre Loti in the secrecy of the harim now reads Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell on a park bench in Taksim. What is the poison and what is the antidote? No one, I dare say, can be judicious and precise, at the present time, in answering the question. Our modern prophets may be responsible for a revival of interest ultimately in the romantic era—may even drive us back to its scented shades.

Meanwhile, the Turkish woman, who has unveiled her face and her mind, is willing to stand European fashion before the judges of a beauty contest. And the editor of the Turkish review receives and publishes her photograph with the nonchalance of a theatrical manager. His readers, too, may judge—and choose. From the slave-market to the beauty review, is not, after all, an innovation. It is a development in, at least, the masculine mentality. For while in the past a Turk inspected a slave as he would a brood mare, he has to stand today at a virtuous distance, trusting his eye and mind, or even be content with a vision, on paper or on the screen, of semi-nudity. But other contests of a more serious nature are taking place today in Turkey; and the Turkish girl, even as a typist, is catching up with her American sisters.

On the other hand, her Muslem sisters in other parts of the Near East do not altogether approve of her speed. She is too fast for them, even as Mustapha Kemal is too fast for the *mul-lahs* of Afghanistan. The fact is that the woman movement in Turkey, because of its ultra-revolutionary spirit, is exerting little or no influence beyond the Turkish frontiers. This revolutionary spirit may be compatible with the Turk in whom the Islamic religion is not, after all, deeply rooted; but it can not find free access into such strongholds of Islam as Persia and Arabia or be received enthusiastically in such centres of Islamic learning as Cairo and Damascus.

Thus, by its own force and scope, the movement is isolated. But there are before it the possibilities of either increasing in power and overcoming the barriers of tradition in other Eastern countries about the time the woman movement there had become somewhat radical, or of experiencing a reaction which will force the Turkish woman to take a few steps backward to meet her slowly advancing Eastern sisters. The latter, in my opinion, is more probable. To leap is as bad as to creep. But from the kitchen to the platform direct is not so dangerous a leap as from the harim



*Moslem women venturing in public had to be heavily veiled according to time-honored traditions.*





*Manifestation of the emancipation movement in the East. Delegates to the Women's Congress held in Damascus in June of this year.*

to the dance-halls, for instance, or to the business world. A woman publicist may also be a good dancer and a good wife; but she can not be of much help to the thousands of her sisters who, through the same new economy of life, go astray. Even a publicist in the whirl and upheaval, may become a publican. And a lupanar, which very seldom existed in Islamic countries, is not an improvement upon the harim. Slippery, indeed, is the dancing floor of the Republic.

In Egypt the way to the dance-hall has not yet been open to the Muslim girl, and may not be for a time to come. Instead of a slippery floor, however, she has a thorny path. And the thorns are not from Europe. The Azhar University of Cairo is a hot-house of a variety of spinous plants, and it furnishes the nation with hedges of every kind.

The Azhar dons, who are more intransigent and straitlaced than any of their colleagues elsewhere, oppose with the Koran every innovation imported from Europe. Not long ago there was

a flaming controversy between them and the young reformers about the hat; and one of the dons wrote a book to prove that the hat is not the proper thing for an Orthodox Muslem—it is not sanctioned by the Koran. Incidentally, I might say that in a part of southern Arabia the sun, and not the Koran, is the recognized authority. The Arabs there, men and women, who are not less religious than the learned shaikhs of Al-Azhar, find it necessary, when they are working in the fields, to wear hats—large straw hats of their own making.

When it comes to argument it does not require much effort to drive the heavy-turbaned Muslem dons to the wall. Qasim Amin, one of the greatest of modern Egyptians, drove them all to the wall, but apparently, as it was then observed, to no purpose. More than a dozen books were written against his one book *The Emancipation of Woman*. And on both sides the Koran was invoked. "Woman's place," said the dons, "is where the Prophet placed her." "The Prophet," said Qasim Amin, "found woman in bonds, a miserable chattel, and after lifting her to a position that was compatible with the spirit of the times, he opened to her, through the very Koran, the way of gradual development and freedom. We are continuing the work of the Prophet." And the reformer, who was an eminent jurist, could not be accused of misunderstanding or misinterpreting the Koran.

This was forty years ago, when in Turkey rarely a voice was heard for the emancipation of woman. Qasim Amin was then alone, not only in Egypt, but in the whole Islamic world, and now, fifteen years after his death, he is the guiding light of a nation-wide movement and he has many disciples even among the students of the Azhar University.

But the foremost exponent of his principles today is a woman of rank and power, the widow of the nationalist leader the late Sa'd Zaghloul. When her husband was exiled by the British Government in 1922, she was asked if she would like to accompany him. "No," she replied, "I will remain here to continue his work." Another influential disciple of Qasim Amin, who like the widow of Zaghloul has discarded the veil, and who takes an active interest also in politics, is Huda Shi'rawi, a society leader and organizer of exceptional ability. Lady Huda is also one of the best known Oriental women in Europe, where she frequently sojourns, moving from one woman congress to another in the interest of her country and her sex.

Qasim Amin has also received, directly and indirectly, official recognition. At the Egyptian University, not long ago, tribute was paid to a young authoress whose work was inspired by the reformer; and when the Egyptian sculptor Mukhtar was commissioned by the Government to make a monument to Egypt, he conceived it in the terms of the woman movement. His work is in reality a tribute to Qasim Amin; for the Mother of the Nation in marble stands erect and unveiled.

But the veil in itself is no more a vital issue. The change from a heavy material to a light chiffon, white or black, is a significant comment upon its evolution. From an esthetic point of view, however, there is a hope, even among the moderns, that it does not thin down to nothing. The Egyptian flapper in high heels, a short skirt and a filmy veil, is a picturesque contribution to that kaleidoscope of color and fashion the Musky. She exemplifies the potency, even the gaiety of silken defiance. And as a recruit, she is also often seen among the more conventional of her sex in the political demonstrations of the day. Thus, through the various channels of politics and education, of culture and fashion, the mission of Qasim Amin is being accomplished.

It also radiates its influences to other Arabic-speaking countries through the written word. There are today several magazines in Cairo devoted to the movement and edited by Christian and Muslem women. But the most distinguished among the writers is Mary Ziadi, a Christian from Mt. Lebanon, whose home in Cairo is the magnet of the intellectuals of both sexes and of all religions. It is the only salon that I know of in the Near East. Miss Ziadi writes under the pen name of Maiy, and she is fast becoming a power in the woman movement, not only in Egypt, but wherever Arabic is read.

In Syria many other forces and influences are at work. But the Muslem woman there, although opposed to the old traditions, is not ready, it seems, for any radical action. She has not the heroic quality of the Turkish woman, who tore her veil and waved it as a banner of freedom; nor is she favored with the economic conditions that enabled many families in Egypt during the past forty years to employ foreign governesses and teachers for the education of their girls at home.

Moreover, the spread of French fashions in Syria, the fashions, rather, of the Paris Boulevard, with a powder puff and a lip stick to complete the public defiance, aroused even the Muslem youth to indignation and rage. There were their sisters and



their young wives taking the air or going to shop, veiled to be sure, but clad in a meagerness of French fabrics, which exhibited a full measure of legs and bare arms. It was outrageous, it was insufferable. But the indignation of men expressed itself even more outrageously, criminally. Muslem women, dressed in the Paris fashion, were attacked on the streets with nitric acid, which penetrated through silk and satin. Some of them were burned in the face. Later in Damascus, which is more conservative than Beirut, a daughter of one of the best families, dressed modestly in style, walked through the bazaar unveiled and was slapped in the face by a fanatical shaikh. These two instances of the assertion of primitive masculine prerogative, had, on the surface, the desired effect. They checked the extravagance in style. But beyond the surface, deep in the soul of woman, they awakened a dormant power. Indeed, the Syrian women, it was soon realized, were capable of more resistance than they had shown. Instead of publicly protesting, however, they are organizing. And as a reply, perhaps, to the fanatical shaikhs of Damascus, a Woman Congress was held in that most ancient of cities for the first time in its history.

An essential feature of the movement in Syria and Palestine and Iraq, is that women of all creeds, Muslems, Christians and Druses, are working together; and they are all agreed that agitation is not the wisest policy and that organization is not sufficient. They are all agreed that education is even more popular than the Paris fashions. Twenty years ago there were not more than thirty or forty Muslem girls in the various schools of these four cities; today, in Beirut alone, I was told by the Minister of Education, the attendance is more than one thousand.

Beirut, the leading centre of education in the Near East, has more schools and colleges, native and foreign, than any city of its size in the world. But its girl schools, before the World War, were all foreign and more or less of a missionary character. That is why Muslem parents refused to send their daughters to them.

But during the war, when all the foreign schools were closed, a Syrian woman, Marie Kassab, opened a native school where she herself was taught, in the building of the English Mission. The success of the school was such that the attendance in a few years rose from twenty to three hundred, and an enthusiasm for education was kindled in all the neighboring countries. From Iraq, from Palestine, from all parts of the Arabic-speaking world, girls of all creeds, Muslems and Christians and Druses, come





*Modern training for Syrian girls. — Physical culture exercises at the Ahliyah School for Girls in Beirut.*

today to the Ahliyah School of Marie Kassab. The secret of its popularity lies principally in the fact that, besides being native, it is non-sectarian. Technically and executively also it enjoys an uncommon reputation.

The emancipation of woman in Turkey has been achieved, as we have seen, principally through legislation; but in Egypt and Syria, in all the Arabic-speaking countries, as well as in Persia, it is being achieved through education. While emphasizing the power of the school, however, the leaders of the movement do not deny the power of the Government. The two together are certainly more effective and more permanent in their good than the edicts of a dictator even if they include the adoption of a European code of civil law. The Damascus Congress, aside from the cardinal objectives referred to at the beginning of this article, has adopted, as part of its programme, resolutions to secure (1) compulsory education for boys and girls, (2) legislation to prohibit the employment of children under the age of fourteen, and (3) the establishment by the Government of technical schools for both sexes.

## American Near Eastern Colleges

By PROF. CHARLES D. MATTHEWS  
*of Birmingham-Southern College.*

Editor's Note — Prof. Matthews gives in the following article a comprehensive, yet concise, account of American educational activities in the Near East, with special emphasis on the work of the American University of Beirut. The writer is an Arabic scholar and in his travels in Near Eastern countries, which he undertook last year had the advantage of studying first-hand the effects of the splendid educational endeavors of America in those lands. Prof. Matthews has pledged to The Syrian World his steady co-operation and our readers may expect many valuable contributions from his pen in both poetry and prose.

TO Americans who visit the important Mediterranean city of Beirut one of the most interesting sights is the American University. The institution, with its more than fifty buildings, its large faculty, and its more than 2,500 alumni who are filling places of responsibility in the life of many Near Eastern countries, is the outstanding member of a group of such schools.

"Broadcasting international good will," as their slogan reads, there are six American institutions in the Near East College Association located as follows: Robert College and The Women's College, in Constantinople; International College, Smyrna; Sofia American Schools, Bulgaria; and Athens College, Greece, and the university here in Syria. In addition, there is a recently founded American University in Cairo, not connected with the group.

Although some of these institutions have not reached full collegiate standing, they all are having an important part in adapting these lands of ancient civilization to modern life. Through them America as a product of Western civilization is partly repaying the debt which the West owes to the East. Robert College is said to be one of the most potent social forces in this part of the world. The Women's College of Constantinople, as the only institution for higher learning in Turkey, has a unique position of influence. International College in Smyrna lays emphasis on commercial training, and especially on agricultural because of the richness in natural resources of the district in which it is located. The American Schools in Bulgaria have increased opportunities for service and leadership since liberation in the country

—which came about indeed, it is said, by inspiration of the ideals promulgated by Robert College.

Respect in which the American institutions are held in the Near East is well shown by the foundation of the American University in Athens, in 1925, undertaken by request of the people of Greece, is given a campus by a wealthy citizen, and awarded unusual privileges by the governmental decree. Other countries, like Iraq or Mesopotamia, have asked for similar institutions, and many lands of the Orient are asking for graduates for various types of work.

The American University of Beirut was opened in 1866, and has exerted a continually growing influence in the Near East. One of its outstanding schools is that of medicine, which now has more than 800 graduates throughout the Near East, a territory where modern medical science was sorely needed. Other departments, in addition to the regular college of arts and sciences, are those of commerce, pharmacy, dentistry, and nursing. Along with the medical school there is a well equipped hospital where thousands of cases are listed yearly. A preparatory division trains young students for their college work. Everywhere one goes in this section of the world, he finds doctors, dentists, editors, and government officials who are educated at the American University of Beirut. It is the "educational capital" of the Near East, students coming here from other institutions to complete their training. The Near East is making unmistakable progress. In the annual report of the Near East College Association for 1928-29, a document which portrays a romance of practical missionary endeavor, President Bayard Dodge, of Beirut, points to the "dramatic" leadership of four great personalities. They are: Ras Tafari of Abyssinia or Ethiopia (an ancient Christian country); Mustapha Kamal Pasha of Turkey; Shah Riza Khan of Persia, and Ibn Saoud, who is called "the Maker of Modern Arabia."

Beirut itself is a considerable city, having near 250,000 inhabitants, a fine harbor with about 3,000 ships annually, and a unique location at the foot of the Lebanon Mountains. If the business man or ordinary citizen feels uncomfortable in the summer warmth of the city, by a trip of an hour by auto he can ascend to one of the innumerable, picturesque villages scattered over the mountains and there enjoy a climate as of spring! The city is very old, its history reaching back to the maritime state of the Phœnicians, as interesting objects in the university and municipal museums attest. Phœnicians, Egyptians, Assyrians, Romans,

*West Hall, one of the sixty odd buildings composing the American University of Beirut.*





Arabs, Crusaders, Druzes, Turks, and now the French, have been its masters throughout history. The memorials of past rulers are impressively sculptured on the rock cliffs of the Dog River, "Nahr el-Kalb," a few miles to the north of the city, where eleven tablets of inscriptions tell of campaigns from those of ancient Egyptians and Assyrians to that of Napoleon when he was seeking to emulate Alexander in this part of the world. Evidence of French control at present is seen everywhere—in the colorful observance of Bastille Day, July 14; in the ubiquity of the French language; in the war memorial to French soldiers and sailors on the waterfront; in the large number of soldiers still stationed here (many of them black Colonials), and in the extensive program of enlargement of the city by which, old narrow lanes of native buildings are being replaced by modern structures.

We have been living more than a week in the village of "Souk el-Gharb," where there is a summer school for boys as a division of the university, and also a summer school for religious workers of the American Mission in Beirut. As luck would have it, we happened upon a hotel owned by a young Syrian-American who was born in North Carolina "and wants to get back there as soon as possible!"

It is impossible to give more than a hint of the pleasant situation here. From the hotel open-air dining room we can look down on the entire city and environs of Beirut, fully 10 miles away (though appearing to be within a few minutes walk,) and 20 miles by the winding automobile roads or the equally winding railway. We have a wonderful view of the sea, from far north of the city and harbor, to several miles south, past the radio tower over which we recently sent a message and received an answer in a very comforting fashion to people far from home. We watch the sunset here every afternoon,—or climb to the top of the mountain a few minutes away, to obtain a grander view and to watch the lingering reflection on the higher mountains to the west. And then we return as the deliciously cool breezes begin to be a little chill.

The chief business of the people here, in addition to raising fruits, grapes, vegetables, and cocoons for the silk trade of France, and driving American-made automobiles for hire, seems to be running hotels for the summer visitors. Hotels and pensions and cafés are sprinkled all over the mountains. Our hotel is a middle class one, with a friendly, social spirit and very tasty Syrian food. Last night we walked further up the mountain to a de luxe

establishment, and there saw, as one of the chief sights, vacationing Egyptian gentlemen and voluptuous Egyptian ladies winning and losing in a few moments at the table more than a college teacher's monthly salary!

In a measure fulfilling their war-time promises to the Arabs, the British created in Syria after their success against the Turks a kingdom of Syria with Feisal, the son of former King Hussein of Mecca and the native spirit of the revolt, as the monarch. But the French were determined to have Syria according to their pre-arranged plans, and the kingdom was short-lived; Feisal was forced to abdicate, fleeing to Mesopotamia or Iraq where he was given a "consolation throne" in that ancient country of the Assyrians and Babylonians watered by the great Tigris and Euphrates. Since the powerful rebellion led by the Druzes of the Hauran in 1925, the French have reorganized the territory into four states. Syria, the Lebanon, the Alaouites (in the north), and "Jebel ed-Druse," south of Damascus in the Hauran. The greatest measure of freedom has been given to the people of the Lebanon, the state of which Beirut is an integral part. They have a president, council of ministers, and a house of representatives. Next come the people of the state of "Syria," which includes the great portion of the territory, including the region between Aleppo and the Euphrates and running south past Damascus. The "Syrians," as the inhabitants of this artificially hewn-out state are called, have a president but no representative assembly. French governors are still over the Alaouites and the brave but generally fanatical Druzes.

President Dodge thus describes the new State University of Syria, located in Damascus, dean of cities: "Perhaps there is no other university in the world with such a picturesque setting. The Muslim School of Theology is in the 16th century mosque of Sulayman, which forms one side of a court, with the old buildings of the school and charity department on the other three sides. A beautiful tank of water is in the centre. The department of chemistry is in a vaulted chamber, lit by domes like those of a Turkish bath. In front of the University is an old park, with the waters of Damascus pouring down from Lebanon through lovely groves of poplars and fruit trees. Most of the instruction is given in Arabic, and one of the aims of the institution is to save Arabic culture from being swept away by the more modern learning of the West."

# The Tragic Love of a Caliph

## A SHORT STORY

*Adapted from the Arabic*

SAADA, the ranking legal wife of the caliph Yazid, successor of the Prophet, Prince of the Faithful, retired to the most secret recesses of her quarters in the spacious palace of the harem in Damascus and gave orders to her maids and eunuchs that under no conditions should she be disturbed. It was a strange and inexplicable action on the part of the queen when the capital was given up to great rejoicing over the accession of the new caliph. Shouts of *Allahu Akbar* rising from thousands of throats floated to the palace from the crowded streets, while in the palace itself the generals of the great Arab army, the princes of the empire and the notables of the capital, were gathered to render homage to the new sovereign. Even the harem quarters, whose strict seclusion is proverbial, especially those of the caliph's palace, could not escape the contagion of popular joy. The women inmates staged their celebration in their own way: musicians playing gleeful tunes on their ouds, singers making the palace resound with songs of the happiest moods, and dancing girls performing with the extreme of unguarded abandon, as would spring from the most sincere and spontaneous feeling. But the motives behind the queen's seclusion no one dared question. Nor did anyone seem to care amidst the hilarity of national festivities.

Presently, coming stealthily from a secret passage, a man was seen to enter the queen's private apartment, with whom she appeared to be on terms of greatest familiarity. For a time she was engaged with him in earnest conversation, after which she opened a secret chest from which she brought forth several bags of gold and an immense quantity of precious stones and jewelry which she handed him. The man soon thereafter disappeared through the same secret passage whence he had come.

\* \* \*

Three months later the great city of Damascus, then the capital of an empire which had grown within less than a century to greater proportions than the Roman Empire ever reached at the

zenith of its power, was the scene of a demonstration such as it had never witnessed in all its long history, notwithstanding the fact that it is reputed to be the oldest city in the world. Great caravans were converging on it from all parts of the vast-flung empire. Arabia, Egypt, Marrakesh and Spain contributed their contingents. The hosts of Mohammad had conquered almost half of the world, and the responsible caids of this all-sweeping religious-military movement who had been apprised by special courriers of the accession of the new caliph were proceeding to Damascus to render him homage and pledge loyalty. They were bringing the choicest and most precious gifts of their respective lands to the successor of the Prophet. The splendor of their equipage was dazzling in its gorgeous display. Emirs in flowing silk robes, bedecked with fine jewelry, and their chargers caparisoned in silver and gold, rode in retinues scarcely less gorgeous. Behind them trailed long caravans of camels bearing rich stuffs, and spices, and precious metals and stones intended for gifts to the new caliph. The population of the city, almost to a man, was foregathered at the city gates or in the public squares. The muezzins, from atop hundreds of minarets, sent forth from silvery throats joyous shouts of *Allahu Akbar* that rolled over the city like distant echoes of a celestial choir. All activity in the city had ceased, except that which had direct bearing on proclaiming the ascendancy and power of Islam.

Entering the city by the southern gate, the African contingent, coming from Al-Maghreb, was by far the most imposing both by extent of numbers and display of wealth. It was composed not only of Moroccans and Tunisians but of representatives of all the Barbary States of North Africa as well as of those of Egypt.

Somewhere in Morocco a man and a maid had joined this caravan and during the whole march maintained themselves in strict seclusion. The man was apparently the master or custodian of the girl, because he was extremely jealous of her and solicitous for her welfare and safety. He had sought the caid of the caravan at the outset of the journey and confided to him something of apparently great moment, because the caid assigned to him and his charge a place in the line immediately following his own bodyguard, and none was suffered to interfere with them or molest them. With the single exception of the caravan leader, none knew who the pair were, nor whence they had come or whither they were going.

Once inside Damascus the man and the maid fell out of line



and mysteriously disappeared. Amidst the great tumult attending the reception of the great caravans from distant lands their absence went practically unnoticed.

The man apparently knew his way about the city well. He led his camel through winding, narrow way streets, now totally deserted, until he reached a secret back entrance to the palace of the caliph. The same guard who had let him pass two months before admitted him now, and soon he was in the presence of the queen Saada in her private apartment.

"Masrour," exclaimed the queen as she rose to meet him, "hast thou succeeded in thy quest? Is Hubaba with you?"

There was something in the uncontrollable excitement of the queen which indicated that the mission upon which she had sent the man Masrour was to her one of paramount importance. For a second she seemed as if she would read the answer in his eyes, so anxious was she over the outcome, and when he smilingly answered, "With the help of Allah, the orders of my mistress have been successfully carried out," her joy knew no bounds, and forgetting rank and restraint, she threw her arms about him and embraced him affectionately. The queen's conduct can be explained only by the fact that Masrour was her trusted servant and adviser.

"Where is she now?" again asked the queen, her excitement hardly abated.

"I only await your orders to bring her to your presence," replied Masrour, who remained calm and collected in spite of the queen's excitement.

In her impatience the queen almost pushed Masrour out of the room, exclaiming: "Thou base son of the desert! How canst thou so behave when thou knowest full well the degree of my impatience!"

Masrour was not long in returning with Hubaba. He had left her only in one of the ante-chambers there to await his call. The girl was of surpassing beauty. Contemporary Arab chroniclers describe her as the most beautiful, as well as the most accomplished, woman of her times. She was educated at the hands of the most eminent masters of the age and was versed in poetry, in Arab lore, and in vocal and instrumental music. There was none other that surpassed her in all the arts of entertainment.

Saada, the queen, fairly flew to embrace Hubaba when she saw her enter. She seated her by her side on the divan and was profuse in her show of loving solicitude. But she would not keep

her long in this condition after her long and trying journey. She clapped for her maids and had them take Hubaba to the bath, and, later, clothed her in her choicest queenly robes and bestowed upon her the costliest jewels. Truly, after her refreshing bath and her appearance in the gorgeous regal robes, Hubaba stood out like a houriat from Al-Janna, a temptation and a subject of admiration to all mortals.

So far Hubaba had said nothing beyond a few words of appreciation and thanks, so overwhelmed was she by the profusion of the queen's hospitality and kindness. Now that she had been through her bath, and was sharing with the queen the bountiful repast that a long train of eunuchs and slave-girls were serving them in an endless variety of tempting courses, Hubaba made bold to ask of the queen the reason for such action. The queen was frank and explicit.

"You realize, my dear, the love of Yazid for you," she said. "Ever since his brother Omar, when caliph, forced him to part with you he was disconsolate. Now that he has come to the caliphate it occurred to me that I would be doing an act which would secure for me the joys of Paradise if I brought you two lovers together. Our Prophet Mohammad, (prayers and salutations of Allah be upon him,) has so promised whomsoever did such an act of kindness and charity. As Yazid's wife I love him, but he in turn loves you, and because of my love for him I resolved to contribute to the fullness of his happiness by giving you to him. Therefore have I sent my trusted servant to seek you and purchase you from your new master whatever the price. Now my happiness is complete that I found you."

Hubaba could well realize the reason behind the queen's apparently strange action. She, Hubaba, was not a freewoman and could never aspire to the rank of Saada. And the caliph must have his diversions and pleasures, especially if he be of the character and temperament of Yazid. Of slave-girls he had aplenty, and the addition of just one could not materially affect the situation.

Still, there was cause for some vague, undefined doubt in Hubaba's mind. Her feminine intuition told her that behind this profusion of kindness and generosity there must be a definite, and thus far hidden, reason. But she who was so diplomatic and tactful could not openly question the motives of the queen. For a moment she remained silent, deliberating on the manner to un-

cover the queen's designs without causing offense. Then she spoke:

"Beloved mistress and queen," she ventured, "words fail to appropriately express my deep feelings of thanks and gratitude to you. I am your servant and slave, and thus shall I remain to the end of my days. My only regret is that, owing to my humble station, I can only show my gratitude to you in words. Oh, that I could be of some service to you in any other capacity. My life would be the least I could offer in payment for your great kindness."

At these words the queen was exceedingly pleased, and she again drew Hubaba closer to her and encircled her with her arms.

"Sweet Hubaba," she said, "it is true that I am the ranking wife of Yazid, but you should realize it is equally true that you are the ranking woman in his affections. Ever since Omar forced him to sell you there was a void in his heart that none other than you could fill. But upon his accession to the throne I determined to bring you back to him whatever the cost."

Saada had said something of this nature before and she felt that the repetition did not fully satisfy the curiosity of Hubaba. None but a woman can sense the secret of another woman's heart, and Saada felt that in the heart of Hubaba lurked some deep and subtle suspicion. She decided to tell all.

"Beloved Hubaba," she continued. "While I am solicitous for the happiness of Yazid, I am also extremely conscious of the future welfare and safety of the state. You, more than any other, know Yazid's temperamental nature. In a fit of irresponsibility he is liable to say or do anything. Now that you know this, and realize that I am the first legally wedded wife of Yazid, and the ranking queen of his harem, and since you display such gratitude for the small favors I have done for you, you would amply repay me by an act that will bring you no harm and result in lasting benefit to the state and the line of Yazid. Use your influence with Yazid to have him proclaim his son by me his legal heir. That is my only request of you."

Hubaba gave her consent readily. She was aware of the rivalry between Saada, Yazid's first wife, and Zongia, his second, and could not help but give the former her wholehearted sympathy. Especially since Zongia was known to be negotiating for the purchase of Selma, another famous singing girl, to make a gift of her to Yazid. Hubaba could not help but feel slighted in

her preeminent standing, and naturally sided with her own mistress.

\* \* \*

Meanwhile, the caliph was holding court in the throne room receiving the delegations of the various conquered countries. The finest works of art in cloth and jewelry and carved wood and all manner of precious material were laid in heaps at his feet. The poets of the empire recited original poems and heads of delegations delivered orations. The atmosphere of the palace was surcharged with the exotic scent of incense and ambergris and sandal wood. It was a day when Islam was celebrating its glory in a manner never before nor after approached in its history.

But in spite of all this display of pomp and power, the heart of the caliph was troubled and heavy. He had come to power only through the law of heredity which his father Muawiyah had introduced in Islam against all tradition. But Yazid was out of his element. His dominant passion was the love of women, wine and song. He entertained no scruples on the Koran's injunction to the Faithful against the use of wine. And he would have bartered his throne unhesitatingly at any time for the quiet seclusion of his harem with his favorite dancers and singers and cup companions.

While in this state, a messenger from the harem brought him word that Saada wished to see him on a most urgent matter. And since to Yazid personal matters were ever more important than considerations of state, he immediately left the great assemblage and proceeded to the private apartment of the queen, there throwing himself on a divan to relax from the boredom of the day, and not even inquiring about the nature of the business which caused Saada to send after him. Yazid was convinced not only of Saada's loyalty but of her better judgment, and would not question her motives. Perhaps, he thought, she resorted to this means so as to drag him away from the boredom of official functions. He was content to let her have her way with him.

But to Saada the thoughts of Yazid were like an open book. She could anticipate his every impulse and every move. He was to her not unlike a mere child, and what cared she if he was spoiled so long as he had now succeeded to the caliphate and through him she could come to the realization of her own ambitions.

*(To be continued)*



# The Twin Cities of the Orontes

*A CHRONOLOGICAL RECORD OF THE EDITOR'S  
TRIP ABROAD*

X

By SALLOUM A. MOKARZEL

OUR journey from Aleppo took the nature of a real adventure.

The vast expanse of uninhabited country we had to traverse, with only a few reckless automobiles making desperate efforts to pass us on the way, or a solitary horseman fully armed, stopping to watch until we passed, and giving us the while some moments of intense anxiety, gave us the feeling of one crossing a real desert. The whole countryside was totally bare of vegetation. Not only forests were conspicuous by their absence, but even single trees or bushes. The only point of difference between these vast bare plains and the desert was in the visible traces of earlier cultivation. We were now in mid-August and the grain had been reaped and all crops gathered. The only coloring to the landscape was that imparted from the nature of the soil.

A striking peculiarity of the Syrian plains in this section is their division into longitudinal narrow strips of almost perfect uniformity. Starting from the road in either direction, these strips ran for what appeared to be a mile or more long. Their boundary lines were plainly traced both by the difference in the manner of cultivation or the various hues of the earth and the withering or dried plants. In some cases patches planted to watermelons retained a color of sombre green, which was most welcome in breaking the oppressive monotony of the landscape.

This odd manner of laying out the farm lands was explained by the fact that all land in the interior of Syria, even up to the present day, is communal property. The community holds the title to the land which is divided into proportionate shares. Every three or four years the land is reapportioned among the shareholders and each is allotted property in the amount of area to which his shares entitle him. But it is the invariable custom that the same land is not given to the same person for two or more successive terms. This would have the obvious benefit of not permitting a

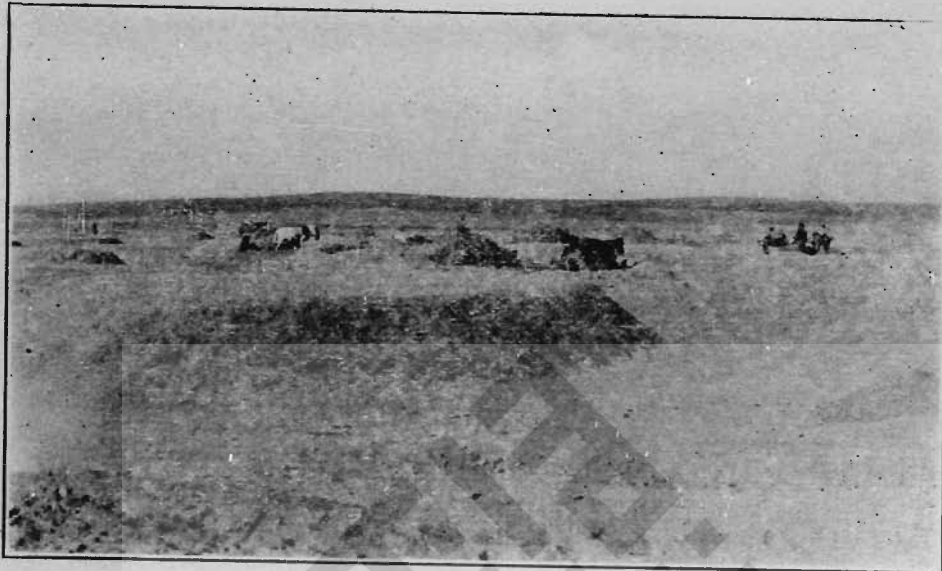
few to hold a monopoly on the choice parcels, whether by location or fertility. Hence, also, the explanation of the strange fact that no forests or fruit groves or any sort of permanent planting is to be found in that part of Syria. No one would go to the trouble or expense of planting for another to reap the benefit, since the lease on the land is of such a short duration.

About thirty miles south of Aleppo we came to a town which apparently was favored with an abundant water supply, since there were evidences of extensive truck gardening by irrigation, while the surrounding country for miles around was thick with green groves. It proved to be Ma'arrat-ul-Naman, the birthplace of the famous Syrian poet and philosopher Abu'l 'Ala, and as such had an especial attraction for us. It was yet early in the afternoon and we decided to make a pilgrimage to the tomb of the famous bard.

Close by the main road stood two huge buildings occupied by a mixed French and Syrian garrison. Between them the road led to the town proper lying a short distance behind. The immediate neighborhood of the barracks presented a pleasing sight with its small but well-kept gardens. But the appearance of the town proper was uninviting, except, perhaps, for its clinging touches of primitive Oriental atmosphere. The houses were huddled together in hap-hazard fashion, while the main street, or bazaar, consisted of two rows of small booths where the merchants, squatting cross-legged in the center, could reach every article of merchandise around. Vegetables seemed to be plentiful and cheap, and the storekeepers apparently undisposed to take advantage of tourists. If they did we were not conscious of the fact. We bought several luscious watermelons for the equivalent of a few cents each.

I made inquiries for the tomb of Abu'l-'Ala, and immediately a bright lad of about seventeen volunteered to conduct me to it. He seemed to be the only one among the group to whom I addressed the question who knew anything about Abu'l-'Ala or entertained any reverence or appreciation for him. The blank look in the eyes of the others seemed to imply the question, "Who can be this celebrity among us who arouses the curiosity of strangers that they would rather visit his tomb than tarry at our bazaars?"

The youth led me through several narrow streets, past a huge stone arch, and into a narrow alley along the sides of which rose high garden walls. He stopped at a dilapidated wooden gate from which we entered a court about forty feet square. A chorus of



*A scene of the vast plains in the interior of Syria in the harvest season. Primitive methods are still used in threshing grain.*

juvenile voices rose from a room to the right, through whose open door we could see a turbaned school master squatting on the mud floor and surrounded by a group of children seated in like position. Our guide went directly to him and apprised him of our mission, and he immediately called for his slippers, which one of the pupils placed before him. He then rose and felt his way along the wall until he reached a door which he unlocked with a key which he carried constantly about his waist, and in the center of a small, dingy chamber, into which light entered only through the door, we saw the slab marking the tomb of the famous Arab poet. For the few moments I stood in reverential awe at this shrine, I could not help but make a damaging comparison. Only a month before, on my way to Syria, I had visited Lisbon, capital of Portugal, and marveled at the magnificent marble tombs which the Portuguese wrought for some of their national historians and poets, going to the extent of raising them to the exalted station of saints by devoting to them the most elaborate chapels of the magnificent convent of Jeronymos; while the tomb of Abu'l-'Ala whose intellectual influence has been growing steadily for the last thousand years, is permitted to remain in the most abject condition of neglect. Something must be radically wrong with the East, at least to our modern conception.

Abu'l-'Ala is not unknown to Occidental scholars. It may



*The main street of Ma'arrat ul-Na'man, birthplace of the famous poet-philosopher Abu'l 'Ala, photographed from the center of the public square.*

rather be said that he is more appreciated by them than by his own countrymen. His works were discussed and partly translated by a number of British Arabists, notably Professors D. S. Margoliouth and Raynold A. Nicholson. To our own author and poet, Ameen Rihani, however, belongs the distinction of being Abu'l-'Ala's biographer and translator in English. He has written a most comprehensive treatise on the life and works of Abu'l-'Ala, and rendered a selection of his poems into English verse, which were published in 1918 by James T. White Co. under the title of "The Luzumiat of Abu'l-'Ala."

The eminence of Abu'l-'Ala in the realm of advanced thought and boldness and realism in expression may be judged by the fact that he was styled the Lucretius of Islam and the Voltaire of the East. He was born in 973 A. D. and is said to have been stricken with total blindness at the age of five. How he was able to master the arts and sciences with the thoroughness he achieved is the marvel of scholars. He died about the middle of the eleventh century, before the Persian poet Omar Khayyam was born, and the similarity of thought which exists between the two leads Mr. Rihani to conclude that "Omar Khayyam, I have reason to believe, was an imitator or a disciple of Abu'l-'Ala."

The schoolmaster custodian of the tomb of Abu'l-'Ala had shown us every courtesy, and the unfortunate circumstance of his blindness, while engaged at the profession of teaching, in exact





*Entrance of the tomb of Abu'l-'Ala in the courtyard of the elementary school conducted by a blind teacher, the second from the left.*

duplication of the case of Abu'l-'Ala, gave us license to mention the fact to him. It proved that the present incumbent of the chair of the great Arab poet was also stricken with blindness in infancy. His name is Sheikh Ismail Shardoub. What a strange coincidence!

On the road to Hama, the topography of the country presented the same desolate aspect as that previously encountered, and not a trace of forestation could be seen until we reached the banks of the Orontes. But in Hama we discovered that irrigation was done by primitive and laborious means. The great water wheels, for which this city is noted, raise the water from the low running stream into huge canals supported by stone arches. The squeaking of the wheels is continuous and atrocious, but to the inhabitants it is sweet music. Bards from time immemorial have immortalized the wheels and their music in popular and classic song, and that for the obvious reason that water to the Arab represents the most precious gift of life.

We were told that the principal sight of Hama was the public square by the bridge. We saw there nothing but cafés fringing the high banks of the river. Sheikhs in turbans and flowing robes, and Effendis in European garb and tarboushes, were either reclining on low cushions, or seated around the tables on low



*Abu'l-'Ala, the Voltaire of the East.*

*(A conception by G. K. Gibran.)*

rush-bottom stools, some smoking their arghiles and others playing games or drinking black coffee and refreshments. We entered the largest and what seemed to us the most popular café and ordered some beer, my companion being loath to partake of the refreshments concocted of unfiltered water. But here no intoxicant beverages were to be had. The town was under strict Mohammedan influence which prohibits all forms of liquor—in public. We ordered a coffee which we did not drink, and crossed to another café where we also ordered some beer.

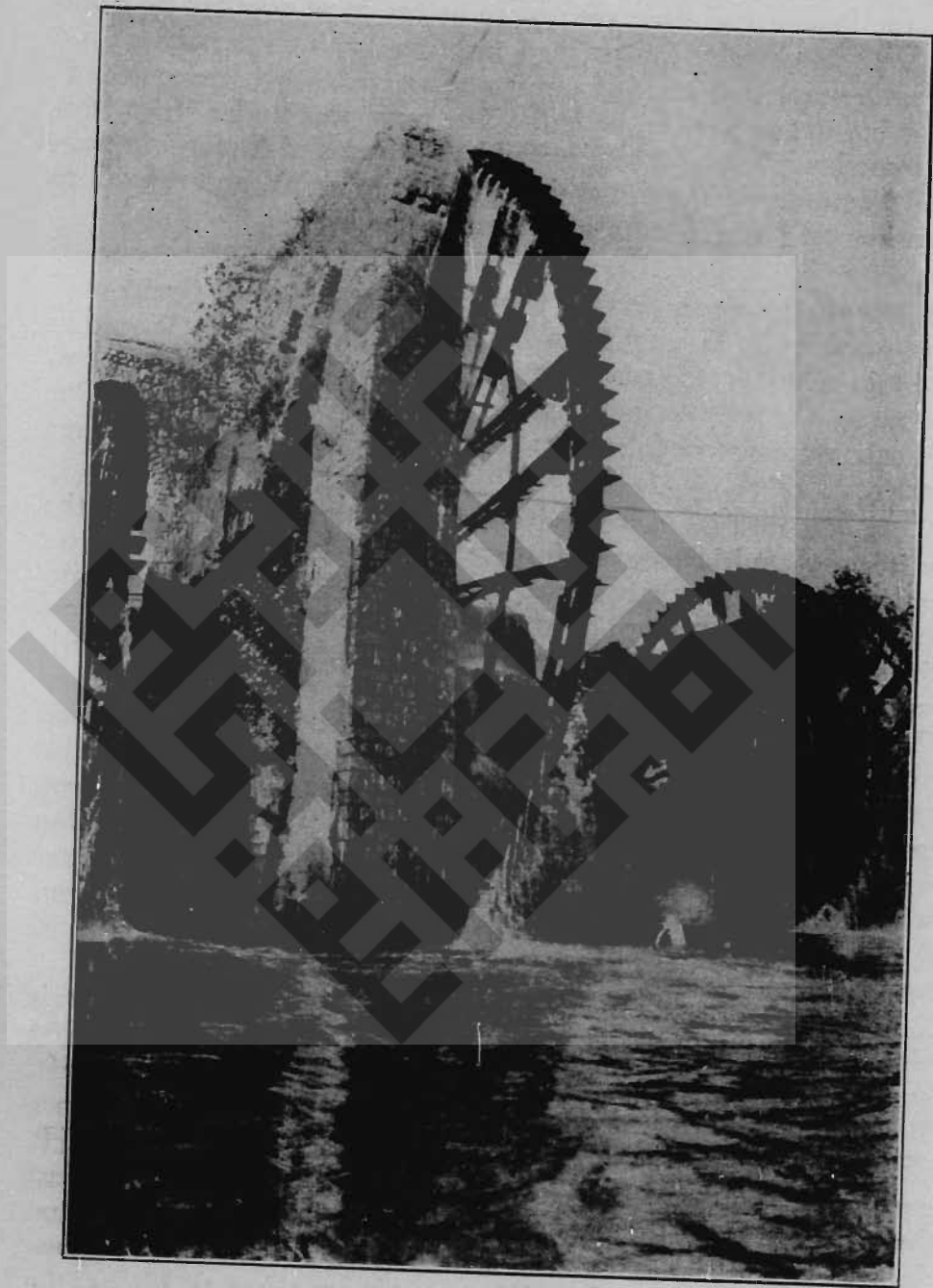
Here we found the waiter more obliging. He hastened to consult the manager who explained that he could "send out" for some as he did not keep liquor on the premises. Wouldn't we take a seat in the rear of an out-building, out of public view, to await the messenger's return? We readily consented. Our throats were parched but my companion was adamant against water.

In the meantime we ordered some watermelon which the waiter said could be served forthwith. We waited fifteen minutes and my companion's patience became exhausted. He made inquiries about the waiter and was informed that he had gone across the square to have the melon prepared in decent style. Now it happened that he took it to one of those peculiar Oriental food shops where all the food, cooked or raw, hot and cold, is exposed to public view but not in glass cases. The restaurateur would also cut you your choice of meat and broil it on iron spits while you wait. When we reached the shop he was handling our melon with his greasy hands and arranging the slices in the manner which he thought made them fit to be served to tourists from America. The melon was left to him untouched with our profuse apologies and thanks.

We again repaired to our hiding place in the café to await the beer, and at the end of half an hour decided that our first speakeasy experience in Syria was a failure. We paid and left. But before we reached our car the waiter came running from a different direction with something wrapped in his apron. He produced a bottle with a German label that felt as if it had just been poured from the brewing kettle. The waiter explained that he had to go to a Christian hotel in town for the beer as none can be had anywhere else. We carried our thirst to Homs, the sister city of Hama on the river Orontes, and about thirty miles to the south.

Our arrival in Homs, sometime after sundown, furnished us

## A TYPICAL SCENE ON THE ORONTES



*The great wheels which raise water from the low-running river into the irrigation canals.*



one of the most trying experiences of our journey through Northern Syria. Our driver had hagøled with a storekeeper in Hama over the price of a can of gasoline and drove off without taking a provisional supply, assuring us that he had more than sufficient to reach Homs. But crossing the gently rolling hills between the two cities we noticed that the driver shut off the ignition and simply coasted down the inclines. It was evident that he was economizing on gas. What we had to tell him need not be repeated here, but before climbing each hill he assured us that the city lay immediately behind. We crossed more than a dozen hills and were met at each turn with the same desolate horizon. There was not a single habitation or a living soul on the way, and our fears rose as our gasoline supply became lower. The sense of solitude in the wilderness, unarmed and in a strange country without provisions, was not comforting. The sun disappeared behind a hill and we began to expect the worst, when in the fast gathering dusk, the tall minarets of the mosque of Khalid Ibn Al-Walid loomed from behind the last hill and we were in view of the city. Praise be to Allah! We were safe at last!

Once in the city we soon forgot the trials and tribulations of the day. By the fountain of the new municipal gardens, caressed by a cool breeze blowing from the west, we came across friends known to us either in person or by reputation. The Homsians are by no means scarce in the Syrian community of New York and some of them were then in the home town on a visit. Meeting them brought pleasant memories of our new home country.

That night a feature program was to be given at the municipal theatre. We had not been inside a movie house in Syria so far and decided to take advantage of the opportunity now offered. Our hosts took a loge in the balcony, affording a splendid view of the floor below. I advisedly refrain from calling it the orchestra or pit because that would be a misnomer. The floor is level and has no permanent seats. It is no more nor less than a regular café. Tables are set all about where large or small parties form to enjoy their wonted manner of amusement with the cinema as an adjunct or an added feature. Arghiles are served as well as coffee and refreshments, and between the acts, or the reels, the waiters circulate to give service and the audience indulges in conversation. The scene was typical of a phase of city life in Syria.

The cosmopolitan nature of the audience gave rise to some amusing incidents. It was composed of French officers and their wives, sheikhs from the desert, transient tourists and townsfolk.

The original titles of the picture, in French, were thrown on the screen only for a few seconds. The Arabic translation, written in a crude hand, was at times misleading. This caused vociferous complaint from both French and natives.

The forenoon of the following day we were taken in charge by Mr. Raffoul Nasser, founder of the National College of Homs, for a tour of the city. A straight, broad boulevard is being opened in the center of the town leading to the railway station, now in the outskirts. It stands in sharp contrast to the old souks which still retain all the marks of their Oriental primitiveness. We visited the silk bazaar and it proved to be an immense quadrangular building, with a spacious interior open court, where trading caravans display their wares and put up while in the city, in the immemorial Eastern fashion. The permanent shops are located in an upper tier running around the whole building. Homs is noted for its silk fabrics.

The mosque we had first seen proved to be one of the outstanding places of interest in the city, whose history dates back to the early Moslem conquest. It was rebuilt some twenty-five years ago along the plan of St. Sophia in Constantinople, Sultan Abdul Hamid donating all the rugs for its furnishing. The tomb of Khalid Ibn Ul-Walid, the Arab general who conquered Homs, occupies a prominent place in the edifice.

There are also some Christian shrines of interest in the city. Our learned volunteer guide conducted us to the Greek Orthodox church of St. Lian whose miraculous specialty is mental and nervous diseases. We were shown a narrow, stuffy compartment behind the main altar where patients are confined for a night, emerging either cured or non-violent.

Homs may also claim the title of the windy city. At night a western wind usually blows that attains at times a velocity of sixty miles an hour. The Homsians claim this as one of the distinctive advantages of their city, because it cools the nights as in no other place in the hinterland of Syria.

And in Homs also we had occasion to witness the efforts of the prohibition policy in Syria. We were driven to the once famous gardens of Al-Meemas, where the waters of the Orontes have wrought a fairyland of cool atmosphere and beautiful vegetation. Alas! the walks and the shrubbery and the ponds were in the worst state of neglect imaginable, because the concessionnaire of the only café was forced to close for having been caught twice selling arac.

The southbound train leaves Homs at 1 P. M. every day. We arranged to take it to Baalbek rather than risk another long journey across the Syrian wilderness with our half-breed chauffeur.

## *The Battle*

By DR. SALIM Y. ALKAZIN

BENDING low its lofty crest  
To elemental rage,  
That in their maddened hurry,  
And unabated fury  
A battle royal wage,  
Smiting at its sides and breast,  
Pitilessly. Moaning, still  
Its crown with steel-like spring,  
Persistently regains  
Its former poise, its pains  
Forgotten, like a sting  
Causing ne'er a mortal chill.

Mid the fray some limb was torn,  
Some leaf was torn away?  
Is not the heart still sound,  
And in the friendly ground  
The roots embrace the clay,  
Drawing life for life unborn?  
Watch it greet the youthful spring  
As bride her mate, draped o'er  
With gauzy finery,  
And magic broidery  
The while the bridal score,  
Silver throated warblers sing.



# ALI ZAIBAQ

(*Quicksilver*)

THE UNPARALLELED ADVENTURES OF THE  
CHIEF OF POLICE OF THE CALIPH HAROUN  
AL-RASHID, OF THE CITY OF BAGDAD.

*Translated from the original Arabic by*  
SALLOUM A. MOKARZEL and THADDEUS S. DAYTON

## FOREWORD

This story of Quicksilver, the Chief of the Secret Police of the Caliph Haroun Al-Rashid, has been more popular than the Thousand and One Nights in all Mohammedan countries from time immemorial.

The name of the author of this remarkable work and the date of its origin are alike unknown. It existed for many centuries in the memories of professional tale-tellers wandering with caravans across the deserts of Arabia. Only within the last two hundred years has it been put into manuscript form in Arabic. Doubtless, like the Thousand and One Nights, it is the product of many romancers, each of whom has added something to the original story.

**I**N the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful!—

This is the story of whom there is no peer, the star whose lustre surpasses that of all other stars, the Lion of the Forest and the Conqueror of All Enemies: Quicksilver, Chief of the Secret Police of the Sultan Haroun Al-Rashid, of Baghdad, who triumphed over the wicked Dalila and out-witted all the other contestants for his coveted post, thereby causing his fame to be borne by caravans throughout the length and breadth of the whole World.

## CHAPTER I.

### DALILA THE SERPENT

**T**HERE was, in the time of Haroun Al-Rashid, a man called Ahmad El-Danaf who had attained great fame for his intel-



ligence, bravery and wonderful feats of valor. For that reason the Caliph recognized his proven fitness for the service and invested him with the position of Chief of the Secret Police, in and around the great city of Baghdad. At the time there were only four bodies of secret police in the whole Islamic Empire, namely, at Baghdad, Aleppo, Damascus and Cairo. The last three were subordinate to Baghdad.

At this time there was in the city of Ispahan, the capital of Persia, a woman called Dalila, who had attained great favor in the eyes of the Shah of Persia and Khorassan, because of her mastery of all the arts of trickery and wickedness. The Shah trusted in her implicitly, and when he heard of the surpassing beauty of the daughter of the Moslem Caliph, Haroun Al-Rashid, he longed to possess that princess.

Forthwith he summoned Dalila. She straightway appeared before him and after kissing the ground three times at his feet she asked for his commands. The Shah told her of his desire to have brought to him the peerless daughter of the Prince of the Faithful, and Dalila assured her sovereign of the comparative ease with which she could execute his wish and forthwith put on the dress of travel and was soon on her way to Baghdad.

Dalila, the Serpent, who was secretly faithful to nothing but her own caprice, no sooner had beheld the beauty of the city of Baghdad than she decided to throw the mission of her master to the winds and to make her permanent home in the Abode of Peace, as the Moslems call their capital. Instead of endeavoring, therefore, to gain possession of the daughter of the Caliph she set to work conspiring against Ahmad El-Danaf in order to supplant him as the head of the Secret Police. She committed or caused to be committed many atrocities, assassinations, robberies and other crimes which threw the city into an uproar and caused the populace to cry out against Ahmad El-Danaf who was seemingly powerless either to prevent or to detect the causes of these disorders. Thereupon the Caliph caused a crier to go about the streets of the city proclaiming immunity and pardon to the perpetrator of these crimes if he were willing to disclose himself.

Now this is what Dalila desired and she forthwith repaired to the court of the Caliph and made herself known to him. Haroun Al-Rashid was greatly surprised that a woman was able to out-wit all the forces of his secret police and he invested her with a robe of honor and proposed to install her as the Chief if Ahmad El-Danaf proved to be unequal in the future to the task.

Ahmad El-Danaf, whose hair had been turned prematurely gray by the trickery and subtlety of Dalila, readily assented.

That was a great day of rejoicing for Dalila the Serpent, but Ahmad El-Danaf, in mortal fear of this new enemy, forthwith called unto him some of his faithful and trusted aides and friends among the Secret Police and fled with them to Alexandria, in the Province of Egypt, the city of his birth.

There was, among the friends of the deposed chief, an Egyptian called Hassan Raselghoul, who had the renown of being the most courageous of all the secret police in the empire. He stood loyal to Ahmad El-Danaf and returned with him to Egypt where he subsequently married Fatimah, daughter of the Sheik Nour-eddin, the Magistrate of the City of Fayoum.

When Hassan Raselghoul reached Egypt he had to disguise himself for fear of Salah-Eddin who was the head of the Secret Police of the Sultan in Cairo. This Salah-Eddin had previously supplanted Hassan Raselghoul in this post and had caused him to flee to Baghdad. After many encounters in Alexandria with the spies and emissaries of Salah-Eddin, of whom he killed in all about five hundred, Hassan Raselghoul repaired to Cairo in order to take reprisal on his enemy in person. But there some of Hassan's influential friends interceded for him with the King, who granted him pardon. After having brought about a reconciliation between him and his mortal enemy, the King made Hassan Raselghoul a Chief of the Secret Police, conferring upon him powers equal to those enjoyed by Salah-Eddin, who continued in his place as before.

But Salah-Eddin did not forget his former enmity. He caused to be sold unto Hassan Raselghoul a beautiful slave-girl whom he instructed to administer poison to Hassan with his food at the first opportunity, promising her that if she were successful he would make her his wife and give her precedence over all the other women in his harem.

Hassan Raselghoul fell an easy prey to the wiles of this beautiful woman.

The slave-girl had been only three days in the household when Hassan Raselghoul was found lifeless. The cause of his death was not apparent. Fatima, his wife, while weeping over his corpse, in the madness of her anguish grasped the hair of her husband's head and was amazed to see it fall, like withered leaves, to the ground. Then she knew that his death was brought about by poison.

She interrogated the slave-girl and by means of threats and tortures wrung from her a full confession of the conspiracy against her husband on the part of his ancient enemy, Salah-Eddin.

The slave-girl was put to death and her body thrown to the dogs outside the city walls. The corpse of Hassan Raselghoul was buried with all due honor in a secluded spot in the gardens of his home.

Fatima was overwhelmed with grief, but nevertheless concealed the fact of her husband's death and announced that he had departed on a long journey.

Not many days thereafter she gave birth to a son whose countenance shone like the full moon and who showed every indication of being of masterly intelligence. The sages said of him that undoubtedly he was predestined to attain great fame and many honors; that he would be the cup-companion of Kings. He was named Ali, but became known to all the world as Quicksilver.

Such was the origin of the Shining Star, the Lion of the Forest, the Bravest of the Brave, by whom the most wonderful achievements of his age were predestined to be executed.

By the time Quicksilver had attained the age of twelve he had mastered all knowledge of horsemanship and sword play and was notably dexterous in the arts of war. His fame spread throughout the city until it reached the ears of Salah-Eddin, who had compassed the death of his father, and who had learned of Quicksilver's identity. He instructed his men to seize the boy at the first favorable opportunity so that he might make him drink the cup of death.

Quicksilver's mother, however, thwarted this plot by sending her son to his father's former chief. On arriving at the house of Ahmad El-Danaf and disclosing his identity Ahmad El-Danaf exclaimed:

"O Quicksilver, your father was the bravest man who ever drank of the waters of the Tigris and the Nile. He was my brother-in-arms, and Salah-Eddin poisoned him."

Upon hearing this Quicksilver cried out in a voice like thunder:

"I will show you what I will do to this dog Salah-Eddin. I will avenge the blood of my father."

And he demanded that Ahmad El-Danaf invest him with a title of chief of the secret police of Cairo in place of Salah-Eddin.

This being done, and Quicksilver being given the insignia of

the office, he returned to Cairo.

Fatimah, who had carefully preserved her husband's weapons, brought them from the places where they had lain hidden and gave them to her son. There were the famous scimitar, the mace, the rope ladder with hooks used in climbing roofs, his father's trusty bow and sheaf of arrows, and all other paraphernalia such as robes of apparel suitable for disguise; benj, which renders the conscious unconscious, likewise its antidote which restores to their normal state those who have been drugged; also phosphoric sticks which blaze at the least touch of heat and illuminate all that is around. She also instructed him in the use of these various things and invoked the aid of Allah for his success.

Thereupon Quicksilver was spurred to fury and performed many deeds which struck terror in the heart of Salah-Eddin and his men and threw the people of Cairo into such tumult that the city seethed like a boiling pot. Finally Salah-Eddin, while invoking the wrath of Allah upon this new pretender to his post, made up his mind that it would be useless to continue his resistance to him and consequently repaired to the court of the King.

The King asked if he had succeeded in capturing this enemy. "O my lord," answered Salah-Eddin, "Allah grant that I may be a ransom for you, and may your name be everlasting. I have exhausted all means at my command to capture this superhuman enemy and bring him in bonds to your presence. But so far he has proved beyond all my efforts and skill. He is not a man. He is rather a genie. Therefore I deliver myself to you to suffer my prescribed fate and cede my position to him. Your servant, O my lord, believes that it is better to live in obscurity than to court death in splendor. You are the master of my head."

Salah-Eddin, having relinquished his post, a crier went about the streets of the city proclaiming the King's immunity and pardon for Quicksilver.

When these tidings reached the ears of Quicksilver he straightway put on his best apparel and repaired to the palace of the King. There he bowed to the ground before his sovereign and addressed him most eloquently. The King was amazed at Quicksilver's youth and received him with all honors. Addressing Salah-Eddin, the King said:

"Here is your rival. Do you cede your position to him now?"

"O my lord," answered Salah-Eddin, "may your reign be ever characterized by justice and impartiality. Suffer me to bring to your attention that it has always been the custom of your



panion until he had performed a certain task such as would prove him worthy of the honor."

"And what is this task which you would have Quicksilver do?" inquired the King.

"Allah grant long life to your majesty," replied Salah-Eddin, "the least request that I can make of him is that he should bring us from the Enchanted City the Magic Box, the All-Seeing Eye."

No one who had sought the Enchanted City had returned alive. This task seemed certain death to Quicksilver, yet he was undaunted, and hastened to set forth.

Quicksilver went to inform his mother of the task which he must undergo to become chief of the secret police of Cairo. His mother begged him to desist from this undertaking. But finding that he was obdurate she told him what she had learned of the Enchanted City and the perils that he would encounter.

"But now, my comrades," said the tale-teller to his comrades of the caravan, "Arcturus is high in the heavens, and we must go to rest. Tomorrow night, if Allah wills, I shall tell you of the amazing things that befell Quicksilver in his quest of the All-Seeing Eye."

*(To be continued)*

## *Greatness*

By G. K. GIBRAN

Every great man I have known had something small in his make-up; and it was that small something which prevented inactivity or madness or suicide.

The truly great man is he who would master no one, and who would be mastered by none.

I would not believe that man is a mediocre simply because he kills the criminals and the prophets.

I am the flame and I am the dry brush, and one part of me consumes the other part.

## *The Tale of a Rose*

By THOMAS ASA

WITHIN the shadow of a noble wood,  
Where through summer days I lonely stood,  
And flung my fragrant breath upon the air.  
Yet solitude had claimed the ceaseless time,—  
A visitor from some exotic clime,  
For none more beautiful than I was there.

Though the witching magic of the day  
Could aught but make one wish to play.  
And laugh and dance with the whisp'ring breeze,  
Yet I bemoaned the will of my stem,  
That caused me to be but one of them,—  
Silent and dumb to my restless pleas.

When, as if in answer to my prayer,  
One day a lovely maid came to my lair,  
Her eyes the color of a changing sea.  
And from that moment she my fancy held,  
While in her face youth's rapture welled,  
Then to my bush she came and gazed at me.

Lovely, and yet more lovely, she became,  
As she in voiceless wonder called my name,  
And leaning nearer kissed me with her breath;  
Which, far more sweet and pure than mine,  
Made me swoon as if some heady wine  
Had taken me within its joyous death.

The virgin lips expressed her childish praise,  
Which to my ears surpassed the poet's lays,—  
And placed her tender hand upon my stem;  
But drew it back without the treasured sight,  
For as bidden by some inner might,  
To leave me there alone to rest with them.

But I bowed my blushing head to her,  
And opened wide my stores of richest myrrh,  
And bade her take me to adorn her breast.

While she, succumbing to the potent lure,  
To own temptation as the only cure,—  
Broke the stem and freed me from the rest.

To her chamber went the lovely maid,  
Where within a crystal vase she laid  
And cooled my fevered pulse with scented rain;  
Then placed me on the mantle near her bed,  
Where I could see at night her drowsy head,  
And ever o'er her never love shall wane.

Each passing day she tendered me her care,  
Belike my silken petals bloomed more fair,—  
And trembled with delight at her caress.  
But one day came when I neglected lay,  
And like a prisoner passed an endless day,  
That nothing could allay or fears suppress.

A week of days had drifted to the past,—  
And left me withered in my morbid fast,  
Without the pride of loveliness I knew;  
But never could I hear her coming feet,  
As she had daily to me come to meet,  
That under her fond gaze I fresher grew.

Soon I lost hope of seeing her once more,  
When who but she, one morn, came thru the door,—  
Back from a distant visit she had come.  
Up to the faded Rose she softly came,  
Sorrowful of my state she called my name,  
In great surprise at what I had become.

And from her eyes the pearly tears I felt,  
In her chaste sorrow my dead heart would melt  
To bring back the smiles to her sweet face.  
In her soft hands she pressed my withered folds,  
And against her heart this Rose she holds,—  
The harvest of the days she would efface.

In memory of the beauty I had known,—  
As for her cruel neglect she would atone,  
She placed my shrunken frame within a book;  
And sealed my sight forever from the day,  
Which I had thought too cheap and cast away,  
All for a moment's pleasure of a look.

## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### OUR FIFTH YEAR

EVER since its appearance, the value of *THE SYRIAN WORLD* has never been questioned, whether as a needed organ for the Syrians in America in the language of the land, or as a medium for disseminating and perpetuating that which is best in Syrian culture by acquainting the Syrian-American generation with their ancestral heritage.

But there was doubt as to the ability of the publication to continue along the high standard it has set for itself and enlist sufficient popular support to insure stability. In this connection, it must be borne in mind that the circumstances of *THE SYRIAN WORLD* differ from those of most other publications of its character. It was launched on personal initiative and conducted under private management without subsidy or organized support. In this respect, it was a purely private undertaking although devoted to the service of a public cause. That *THE SYRIAN WORLD*, under these conditions, has been able to negotiate safely what is considered the crucial stage in the career of a new publication, especially one representing a pioneering enterprise that had never before been

attempted or deemed feasible, only demonstrates the value of the service the publication represents and the growing appreciation of its timeliness.

It is then with natural elation and pardonable pride that we hail the advent of each new year as proof of stability and growth. Our path, so far, has not been strewn with roses, it is true, but hardships are to be expected in all pioneering work. What matters is the assurance of achievement. New courage is always born from the consciousness of work successfully accomplished, and the passing of each year in the life of a publication is but another stimulus of this consciousness and an incentive to further effort.

We are not satisfied with merely holding our ground. We want to accelerate our progress so as to render the usefulness of *THE SYRIAN WORLD* more effective and far-reaching. This necessitates organization and planning that would break the restricted bounds within which the publication has been moving up to the present. The expansion is bound to be fruitful of the most beneficial results in that the sphere of influence of the periodical will be greatly enlarged and its message carried to greater



limits than those it has been reaching hitherto. Of these preparations and plans we hope to be able to make an important announcement in the coming issue. And we feel confident that our loyal friends will immediately realize that the contemplated step will mark a new era of progress in the career of the publication, fitting it the more to portray their culture and finer racial qualities.

These remarks could not be conscientiously brought to a close without an expression of deep appreciation of the efforts of that band of volunteer collaborators who represent our finest talent in America. They have been steadfast in their loyalty to *THE SYRIAN WORLD* and generous in their contributions towards the success of its educational mission. Their names are familiar to our readers.

Nor could we omit mention of those hundreds of loyal subscribers who have not wavered in their constant support. Many among them have even constituted themselves volunteer agents and helped introduce the magazine to many a new subscriber. They were actuated by their enthusiasm for the cause which they felt was their own. Such loyalty cannot fail of inspiring confidence and trust in the future.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

A VIOLENT controversy seems to have developed as a result of the adoption of a dual name for the Syrian pageant held in Boston. We are informed by the Boston correspondent of a New York Syrian newspaper that the difference is being aired in the columns of the American press of Boston. This, indeed, is regrettable, and it was for fear of just such a result that we took our former stand in the matter. We held that inasmuch as we had been all along known in this country as Syrians, by such a name only we should remain to be known whatever the internal administrative divisions in the mother land. Syrians, Lebanese and Palestinians could be included in this classification because their respective countries are within the natural geographical boundaries of Syria. Besides, all Arabic-speaking elements in the United States come from Syria, and to merge them in the all-inclusive term "Arabs" would destroy our work of half a century in America and necessitate our starting the work of education as to our ethnological descent all over again.

It behooves us to bear in mind the all important fact that we in America are Americans first and preeminently,

and that to our posterity in America we owe our prime duty. This duty is partly to identify ourselves by our country of origin. This country, happily, happens to enjoy an independent historical record as well as a distinct geographical entity. Furthermore, the statistical records of the United States do not classify us by our spoken tongue but by our country of origin. It will therefore be immediately seen that we stand to lose more than we could ever hope to gain by a change of name. At best this would only introduce in our status an element of confusion.

We would like to make our stand clear on the matter. We do not approve either of the broad or of the restricted term. Except among ourselves, and in cases requiring clarification, we would not approve of the term Lebanese or Palestinian Syrians, nor of the term Syrian-Arabs. Syria, we hold, is an independent geographical entity which we are bound to recognize. From there we come and by its name we should be known. We have been known in America by this name for for over half a century and it would be a decided loss for us to undo the work it has taken us so long to build and begin anew the work of education with all its resultant confusion and possible misinterpretation.

It is through no prejudice or inimical feeling that we are prompted to take this stand. It is rather in fulfillment of a duty to our race in America as we conscientiously feel it. We fail to see any benefit in the change of name or the adoption of a dual name. Rather, we believe that such a course would result in injury to our standing in America, injury in the sense that we would lose our former identity of long standing and be confronted with the necessity of establishing ourselves anew. And we cannot too strongly emphasize the fact that we stand pledged to uphold our national name and defend our racial interest as an ethnic group in America before and above any other consideration of old-country politics. *THE SYRIAN WORLD* is for the service and defense of the Syrians in America first and it is owing to these considerations that it is forced to take this stand.

We exceedingly regret that such a situation has developed. Regardless of our affiliations or sympathies with old-country politics, we should never have lost sight of the fact that our duty towards ourselves as a racial group in America is paramount and preeminent. The conditions we have chosen to leave cannot claim our interest in the same degree as

those we have chosen to live in. We must be fair to ourselves and give first consideration to our standing in our country of adoption. We must be fair to our children and considerate of their immediate interest by clarifying their stand instead of complicating it. We maintain that the term "Syrians" is the only logical name by which they should be known.

### RACIAL REPRESENTATION

THE Interpreter, organ of the Foreign Language Information Bureau of New York, published recently an article on the Theatre of Nations sponsored by the Plain Dealer at Cleveland. The Interpreter is read by the editors of all the influential papers in the country, and its information usually elicits much favorable comment. Its object is to interpret the finer qualities of our racial groups, to the end that the American public will better understand and appreciate them. Obviously, its service is most commendable.

The object of the Theatre of Nations is to sponsor and encourage the cultural contributions of the various ethnic groups to America. The Interpreter's article was commented upon favorably by the leading New York papers.

We wish to recall that the

Syrians of Cleveland were the first group to give a play in their mother tongue under the new scheme. But neither the Interpreter nor any other paper commenting on the movement made any reference to the Syrians. And for this we cannot hold them to blame. The point of interest in the movement being the encouragement of native art, the expectation was that each group would produce that which is native and intrinsic. This the Syrians failed to do. They produced not an original play but one translated from a European language. Naturally the motivating interest was lost.

Another recent case where the Syrians made commendable efforts at enthusiastic participation in patriotic and civic movements but failed to choose the proper method of representation was the Worcester Syrians' contribution of a float to the historical pageant on the occasion of the tercentenary of the city's foundation. Their portrayal was of a purely American episode, whereas the expectation was for something characteristic of their own race. The Greeks made the proper choice and won first prize.

In the future we should hope to avail ourselves of such singular opportunities to better advantage.



## Political Developments in Syria

### POLITICAL SITUATION IN SYRIA UNSETTLED

No major political developments have taken place in Syria since High Commissioner Ponsot sailed for France after making public the draft constitutions of the several Syrian States, and none are expected before his return which may be delayed until the end of October, according to late reports. This delay is said to be due to the fact that France has not yet decided on a definite policy for Syria in spite of assertions to the contrary. The French Foreign Office is said to have been impressed with the strong protests lodged with it and with the League of Nations against the announced policy of the High Commissioner in perpetuating the political division of the country in the manner proposed in his latest proclamation.

What may be considered a most significant manifestation of the new national spirit in Syria is the sinking by the political leaders of their party differences to refute a statement made to the Mandates Commission in the French report on the alignment of the Syrian political parties. The statement was to the effect that a strong Syrian party approved of the French mandate and of the new administrative arrangement which constitutes of Syria several independent States. Upon news of the purport of the French report reaching Syria a telegraphic protest was dispatched to the League of Nations and to the French Foreign Office signed by the responsible leaders of all political parties denying the truth of the statement. This was considered a most wholesome

manifestation of a new spirit of unity hitherto lacking in Syrian politics. Especially that the leader of the Royalist Party willingly joined in signing the petition of protest with the explanation that the Syrians may be divided as to the most suitable form of administration for the country, but that they were of one mind in matters of basic principles. The Royalist Party, it may be explained, is the most powerful political unit after the Nationalist bloc.

It had been previously taken for granted that upon his return from France High Commissioner Ponsot would order the holding of elections according to the provisions of the new constitutions, or if deferred at all the elections would be held not later than the coming spring. Seemingly confidential reports reaching Syria from Paris represent the French government as being undecided as to the course of its future policy in Syria. The French Foreign Office, according to these reports, had been satisfied that the Syrians were well pleased with the new administrative program laid down by the High Commissioner, and even interpreted the popular strike in Damascus not as of any political bearing but rather as of an economic nature. But owing to frequent and collective protests from the various Syrian political parties the French Government is represented as having experienced a change of mind, to the extent of seriously considering the appointment of an impartial commission to conduct a thorough investigation of the Syrian situation. If such a step should finally be decided upon, the delay attending



the solution of the Syrian problem might carry it well into the indefinite future.

The tenth anniversary of the battle of Maisaloon in which the small volunteer Syrian army was defeated by the French invading army under command of General Gouraud, was celebrated with extraordinary display of patriotic fervor this year. Delegations of the principal cities gathered at the tomb of Joseph Azme, the Syrian Minister of War who lost his life during that battle, and held patriotic exercises. But the mass meeting in Damascus which followed was such as to overshadow any previous demonstration of similar nature. Some of the poems composed for the occasion aroused great popular feeling and the Syrians there gathered pledged themselves anew to the unrelenting prosecution of their national demands.

The Tajeddin government remains the butt of bitter and constant criticism. The latest action to arouse the anger of its opponents was its peremptory prevention of a meeting of the Royalist Party for which a regular permit had been issued by the local authorities of Hama. It is feared that the government is preparing to control the coming elections by the use of intimidating methods.

The office of the High Commissioner announced on July 14 the issuance by the President of France of full pardon for fifty-nine Syrian political prisoners and exiles sentenced for their part in the last revolution. The military leader of the revolution, Sultan Pasha Atrash, and Dr. Abdul Rahman Shahbandar were not included.

Sultan Pasha Atrash issued from his desert exile a call to the Syrian nation to adhere to their original demands for the political unity of

the country, and branded the new administrative divisions proposed by the French as an effort to forever keep the country divided. He also sent a protest to the League of Nations on the new French administrative program declaring his resolve to continue the struggle until the Syrian national demands are granted.

## ITALY SEEKING

### SYRIAN MANDATE?

That Italy is conspiring to secure the mandate over Syria, using for the purpose the influence of the Papal Nuncio in Lebanon and the prestige of the Maronite Patriarchate, is the bold assertion of some Syrian papers who claim to have come into secret information bearing on the subject. The inception of the conspiracy is placed as far back as 1922, when three bishops are said to have induced the aged Patriarch to sign a petition to the Pope asking to be relieved of active duty and to have a vicar appointed to take charge of the affairs of the Patriarchate. The Pope is said to have doubted the authenticity of the petition because the Patriarch had visited Rome only a year before and was apparently in the best of health and spirits. Consequently His Holiness sent the petition back to the Patriarch for verification and by this action the plot of the conspirators was frustrated.

This would have been only of local religious interest had not political motives been ascribed to the plotters. The Papal Nuncio was mentioned as being the real instigator of the conspiracy to remove the Patriarch because of the latter's steadfast loyalty to the cause of France in Lebanon and Syria. The Nuncio, being an Italian, would nat-

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ura'lly want to see his own country the mandatory in Syria and since the Patriarch was the stumbling block in the success of the plan, he sought to have him removed that he may recommend a bishop to succeed him who would favor an Italian mandate.

The rumor having been first given publicity by Moslem papers, almost all the Christian papers of Beirut denounced it as being utterly without foundation and concocted in the brain of an office-seeker who unsuccessfully sought to enlist the support of some bishops and resorted to this means as a measure of revenge. Finally Al-Bashir, a Catholic paper published by the Jesuits in Beirut, officially denied, on the authority of the Maronite Patriarchate, that there was any foundation to the rumor.

The Lebanese government was openly accused of wholesale corruption by a member of the Legislative Assembly in a press interview. His charges, although not specific, aroused the government to action and a special meeting of the cabinet was called to consider the matter. It was at first decided to instruct the public prosecutor to bring court action against the offending legislator, but upon further consideration this decision was rescinded.

Regulation of the tobacco industry is giving the governments of all the Syrian States no little cause for concern. Ever since the abolition of the Regie, or the monopoly held by the French by a franchise from the late Turkish government there has been a scramble for manufacturing and sales privileges. Foreign companies were at first admitted to do business under the same conditions as native concerns, but an amendment is said to have been introduced later giving foreign interests

special privileges which would place the natives at a decided disadvantage. These privileges include the right of foreigners to trial by their respective consuls and their placing wholly outside the jurisdiction of native courts. Consequently the cry has been raised that whatever the name, it is simply one Regie replacing another.

#### BRITAIN BLAMED FOR PALESTINE DISORDERS

The League of Nations officially published on August 25 its mandate commission report on an examination of the Palestine riots of 1923, together with the British Government's comments on the report. The papers disclose a sharp clash of opinion on the responsibility for the bloody disorders, according to an A. P. dispatch from Geneva. The whole matter will be laid for discussion before the League council when it convenes on September 5.

The mandates commission, composed of the strongest Powers of the League, accused the British Government of having failed in its administration of the Palestine mandate, specifically in failing to satisfy the political aspirations of the Arabs, in failing to procure security for persons and property for establishment of the Jewish home, and for being taken by surprise by the outbreak of last August.

Mr. Henderson pointed out the difficulty of satisfying the political ambitions of the Arabs and at the same time advancing the cause of a Jewish national home, while carrying out orders of the League of Nations to maintain the rights of all inhabitants of Palestine regardless of race and religion.

While the controversy over Palestine is waxing hot in Europe the

situation in Palestine itself is no less turbulent. Dispatches from Jerusalem under date of August 22 brought the information that the Arab Executive had issued proclamations calling for a general strike on the anniversary of the outbreak of last year's rioting. The strike was to be a protest against commutation of the death sentence of the Jew Orphali in connection with the riots, while the Arabs tried and sentenced for the same offense were executed. The authorities confiscated the proclamation and suspended an Arab paper for publishing it. It was feared that its widespread distribution would lead to the renewal of the disorders, because it characterized the 120 Arabs killed during the riots of last August as "martyrs" and accused the government of double-edged justice. Zionism was called a branch of British policy.

"You are not under a mandate, but clearly under British rule," the proclamation also declared.

Harry Snell, Labor member of the Palestine Inquiry Commission, made forty-two proposals for Arab and Jewish co-operation which were published the last week of August by the Brith Shalom Society headed by Dr. Judah L. Magnes, chancellor of the Hebrew University and endorsed by it. They included the establishment of Arab-Jewish chambers of commerce, the extension of credit by Jewish organizations to the Arabs, the admission of Arabs to Jewish schools, the extension of Jewish research to Arab districts, the extension of Jewish medical and social service to the Arabs and the allocation of a special member of the Jewish Agency Executive to devote his time to Arab-Jewish relations.

The Arab Palestine paper *El Carmel*, commenting on the proposals,

sets forth certain conditions preliminary to their discussion: It holds that the Jews should agree not to evict a single fellah, not to compete with Arab officials or workers, to employ at least 80 per cent. Arabs in their undertakings, not to claim government aid for their industries, not to compete with Arab merchants, to accept Arabic as the only official language in Palestine, to abandon "the dreams" of a Jewish national home in Palestine and not to oppose Palestine's joining an Arab federation.

This, of course, is the individual opinion of an Arab paper and it may not represent the minimum conditions upon which the Arabs may be willing to reach a compromise with the Jews. The official, and what are supposed to be the irreducible demands of the Arabs, are those submitted by the Arab delegation to the MacDonald Government in London last June and published recently in the English Edition of the newspaper *Falastin*. They are:

1—Legislation to prohibit sale of land by an Arab to a non-Arab.

2—Immediate stoppage of Jewish immigration.

3—Return of those lands which the Government took away from the people on the ground that those in possession did not own the lands according to the Tabu entry.

4—Return of the land from which Arab peasants have been expelled by the Jews on the excuse that these lands were bought from the Jews by their owners.

5—Re-institution of an Agricultural Bank and the protection of the country's produce.

6—Institution of a national representative government according to clause 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.



## About Syria and Syrians

### LEBANESE FESTIVAL IN BRIDGEPORT

Sunday, Aug. 31st and Monday, Sept. 1st were gala days for the Lebanese and Syrians of the Eastern States on the occasion of their Festival-Outing held at Champ's Farm, Bridgeport, Conn. Over two thousand attended the celebration and took part in the different forms of entertainment provided by the committee in charge or supplied by volunteers. A holiday spirit pervaded the gathering which was reminiscent in most particulars to similar festive occasions in the motherland.

The idea of the festival was conceived and sponsored by the Lebanon League of Progress of New York. The committee on arrangements, headed by Mr. A. K. Hitti, was indefatigable in its efforts to provide means of entertainment and comfort for the guests. This being the first celebration of its nature to be held in America, there was no possibility of judging the volume of attendance, and when about five hundred automobiles began streaming to Bridgeport bearing visitors from the New England States, as well as from upper New York State, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and even more southerly States, it was evident that the proposition met with hearty and unanimous approval. It is now planned to hold the celebration annually and perhaps extend it to other sections of the country.

Mayor Buckingham of Bridgeport welcomed the Lebanese to the city in the highest words of praise. He remarked that while coming to attend the Lebanese festival he passed

an open-air meeting of communists who were attacking the institutions of the United States. The orderly manner of the Lebanese celebration and their expressions of loyalty to American institutions stood out in sharp contrast to the other disturbing element. His honor remained to witness folk songs and dances and other forms of entertainment which pleased him immensely.

Mr. N. A. Mokarzel, editor of Al-Hoda and founder of the Lebanon League of Progress, presided at the official function and welcomed the mayor. Mr. Salloum A. Mokarzel, editor of The Syrian World, responded officially to the mayor's address. Rev. K. A. Bishara of Brooklyn spoke also in English on Syria's and Lebanon's place in history.

On other occasions there were speeches in Arabic as well as religious exercises. The celebration was of such a nature as to delight both the first generation immigrants who had an opportunity to live over again their earlier days in the motherland, and the second generation who were given an actual exhibition of some phases of social life of the country of origin of their parents. The consensus of opinion was that such gatherings were immensely profitable and enjoyable, and it would seem beyond doubt that they will be enthusiastically patronized in the future.

The arrangements committee, in explaining the object of these festivals, gives the following reasons indicative of its motives and policy:

"The prime motive of the Festival is to bring the Lebanese and Syrians of the Eastern States together in a spirit of racial brotherhood and

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good-fellowship. It is to be hoped that the movement will spread to other sections of the country for the obvious benefits that are bound to accrue from it.

"While we come together as a racial group bound by ties of kinship and common ancestry, we are, nevertheless, only too mindful of the fact that we owe our undivided allegiance and unwavering loyalty to our beloved adopted country and to all that for which the flag of the Stars and Stripes stands in ideals and principles. Our past record of loyalty as American citizens precludes the necessity of our reasserting our stand on this question.

"Our coming together on such a gathering is because we are influenced by the same traditions governing our former social conditions. We are in the United States a distinct group who owe their adopted country the contribution of the best that is in them towards its culture and future progress. And we are proud to claim one of the most precious heritages that have fallen to the lot of any small nation in history. By coming together as an ethnological unit we propose to keep alive those distinctive features of our racial heritage for permanent contribution to our land of adoption.

"We believe that such gatherings will enhance civic interest and pride, and promote a spirit of co-operation in all constructive endeavor.

"The folk songs, dances and other forms of entertainment that will now be given are the relics of an old and progressive civilization, going back to our ancestors, the Phoenicians, long before our Christian era.

"That the Lebanese have been able to maintain these traditions in unbroken continuity for such a long succession of centuries proves the inherent virility of the race and the

value of their racial contribution to our comparatively young American nation."

#### SYRIAN PAGEANT IN BOSTON SUCCESSFUL

From both special correspondence and fragmentary accounts of the American press in Boston received, we gather that the Syrians of Boston took a leading part in the celebration of the city's Tercentenary held in the middle of July and won the praise of both officials and public.

The pageant, held on July 15 at Symphony Hall, was arranged and managed by a general committee composed of Faris S. Malouf, chairman, Miss Labeebee A. J. Hanna, Miss Theodora Scoff, Rev. Shibley D. Malouf, Rasheed Abdelnour and George J. Khouri. Mr. Ameen Rihani, Prof. Ph. K. Hitti of Princeton and Prof. James R. Jewett of Harvard acted in an advisory capacity.

Symphony Hall was packed to overflowing during the Syrian pageant, among the attendance being a large representation of Boston's highest literary and intellectual elements. Mr. Rihani, who was specially invited by the committee to take part in the celebration, explained the various historical episodes represented in a manner to cause surprise and admiration.

The committee published a pamphlet on the Syrian and Arab contributions to civilization for free distribution on the occasion.

Miss Labeebee A. J. Hanna, a Boston high school teacher, contributed materially to the success of the pageant by her enthusiastic and tireless efforts in coaching the actors, selecting the costumes and composing the special music.

The special pamphlet issued by

the Syrian committee for the occasion was fittingly closed by the following pledge:

"Mindful of the contributions our ancestors made to humanity and feeling the urge to intellectual, cultural and humanitarian achievements, we, in commemoration of the founding of the Massachusetts Bay Colony and as a token of appreciation for and loyalty to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, pledge our religious, moral and racial inheritance to the service of our new homeland, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Republic of the United States.

"We conclude with the words of our former President, Calvin Coolidge, 'All peoples have points of excellence and are justly entitled to the honorable considerations of all nations.'"

The following paragraph is given in the pamphlet as an indication of the Syrians' place in, and contributions to, America.

"In writing about the Syrians in America, Salloum A. Mokarzel, editor of *The Syrian World* said, 'They have helped plant the love of America in the hearts of millions of people speaking the common Arabic language, and they have proven their gratitude and loyalty to their adopted country by responding in vastly more than their proportionate quota to the appeal of the government, both for financial aid and for man power in times of national call.' (*Syrian World*, November, 1927.) Rev. W. A. Mansur, in writing about the Syrian-Americans in the *Syrian World*, said, 'They exemplify in their lives industrious living, patriotic loyalty, law-obedience and love of liberty.' Talcott Williams said of the Syrians in America, 'No more intellectual immigration has come to us in the past forty years.'"

## A SECOND PAGEANT BY SYRIANS OF BOSTON

Aside from their participation in the general tercentenary celebration, the Syrians of Boston took a leading part in other exercises held under the auspices of the Catholic Charitable Bureau on the Common. The *Boston Globe*, in reporting this second event, concedes "that the most elaborate feature was presented by the Syrian group," although Italians, Poles and other nationalities were represented.

Following is the full account of the *Boston Globe*:

"Two men, dressed in Oriental robes, and playing clarinets, headed the procession in which was a truck decorated with the flags of America, Syria and Lebanon. Around the sides of the truck were Oriental rugs and cedars. In the center of the group was an Orientally decorated camel ridden by a Syrian boy dressed as a chief.

The "Pageant of Syria and Lebanon" was a graphic representation by men, women and children of those countries, of eight memorable episodes in Bible history, beginning with Adam and Eve and ending with the sending out by the Savior of Matthews, Mark, Luke and John to spread His Gospel throughout the world.

The various scenes and tableaux, the greater portion of the representation being in pantomime, were regarded by the hundreds of spectators with reverence, and yet with an enthusiastic interest that several times found expression in hearty applause.

There were a number of Syrian and Lebanese dances by children or young women, several choruses by young people of both sexes in costumes of Oriental character, and the music was quaint, simple and in

keeping with the time and the country represented.

There was a tableau of Mary with the Holy Infant in her lap and Joseph by her side, with the coming of winged angels and richly garbed wise men of the East bringing gifts, followed by the allegory of the spreading of Christianity.

The final feature was a spirited Oriental sword and shield combat, reminiscent of the days of the Crusades and more dramatic than most combats in tragedies as presented in the theatre.

The solo dancers, each of whom deserved high praise were Celia Saliba, Olga Scoff, Mrs. Amelia Corey, Rosanne Letourney, Annie Hanaty and Alice Thomas. A dance for two was executed by Pauline Hanaty and Josephine Moussally.

Some of the chief roles in the pageant, with their impersonators were: Adam, Frederick Assad; Eve, Olga Scoff; Abel, S. H. Attaya; Cain, Samuel Haddad; Noah, Solomon Moses; Moses, Antonio Corey; The Savior George Kirk; Joseph, Elias Hajjar; Mary, Agnes Shadrawy; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, respectively, John Lufty, Charles Assad, Nadra Escaf and Joseph Hajjar.

The sword combatants were Nicholas Najjar and Habib Wayshek.

Rev. Archimandrite Peter Abouzeid, B. S., of the local Syrian Catholic Church was on the stage most of the time, directing proceedings and making necessary interpretive announcements to the audience.

The executive committee, which saw that there was no hitch or inappropriate incident in the progress of the enterprise, consisted of two Harvard men, Elias F. Shamon and John M. Shadrawy. The pageant was planned by the local Syrian-Lebanese committee, cooperating with the Catholic Charitable Bureau.

## RIHANI DELIVERS

### SERIES OF LECTURES

For the whole week beginning July 21, our well-known author and traveler, Ameen Rihani was engaged at giving a series of lectures at Chautauqua to a select audience drawn from all parts of the United States. The Chautauqua Daily, in each of its issues for that week, featured accounts of Mr. Rihani's addresses and stressed his eloquence and forcefulness of argument. The paper was expressing the public sentiment of the ever-growing audience which flocked to hear the visiting speaker.

Mr. Rihani spoke on the political, social and cultural conditions of the various Arabic-speaking countries of the Near East. Tracing Arabian history from 800 B. C. and outlining the Arabs' contributions to arts, sciences and culture, the speaker covered the whole span of centuries through succeeding periods until our present time. He dealt separately with the Arab countries under mandate and expressed the opinion that no pacification is possible without unity.

In one of his lectures, Mr. Rihani treated the subject of Arabic poetry giving translations of his own and of other Arabic scholars.

While in Chautauqua, Mr. Rihani was a guest of his friend and admirer, Mr. M. Rashid, at a luncheon attended by a large number of prominent residents and visitors.

## LOS ANGELES SYRIANS

### TO PRODUCE PICTURES

In an Arabic circular letter sent to the Syrian press of the United States and to The Syrian World, Dr. Alexander Mulki of Los Angeles announces the formation of a Syrian stock company for the production of



moving pictures known as the Pan-Arabian Picture Corporation, Ltd. The organizers are five leading Syrians of Los Angeles and Hollywood, Charles Andrews, Dr. Alexander Mulki, J. Haik, Tom Davis and Edward Gillett. They announce their object as being, first the production of talking films in Arabic, English and Spanish, and perhaps in other languages later, featuring the historical background of the Syrians; and, second, to create by this means a medium for better understanding and co-operation among the various Syrian communities in all parts of the world and throughout the Arabic-speaking peoples in their homelands.

The organizers stress the advantage of their location in Hollywood, the greatest picture production and artistic center in the world, and express the utmost confidence in the ultimate success of the undertaking.

#### IMPORTANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES IN PALESTINE

Discoveries by the joint American expedition at Kirjath Sepher in Palestine conclusively prove biblical stories and fix the date of Abraham's time according to a cable dispatch to the New York Times from Jerusalem dated Aug. 19. Dr. Melvin Grove Kyle, director of the joint expedition of the Xenia Theological Seminary and the American School of Oriental Research of Jerusalem, is reported to have so asserted in a public statement. Assisted by a staff of ten archaeologists, including many Americans and 110 native workmen, the expedition uncovered a mound containing ten distinct cities one above the other, linking Abraham's arrival in Canaan from Chaldea of the period of Nebuchadnezzar, who raided Canaan.

"These excavations give the world in a remarkable way a history of the culture in Palestine that it is possible to read alongside biblical history as the supreme test of its trustworthiness," said Dr. Kyle. "Only real events leave anything which can be dug out of the ground."

"The fortress at Tell Beit Mirsim, thirteen miles directly southwest of Hebron, which is the ancient Kirjath Sepher, proved to be a mound of ten cities each separated by burned levels. These ten cities represented only five civilizations."

"The first city dates from 2000 B. C., perhaps earlier, which is Abraham's time in the Scriptures," he continued. "The same social and political conditions of the story of Lot and the angels are reflected in the ruins of this first city which approximates the civilization of that time and not the time of the Kings of Judah in the eighth and seventh centuries B. C."

"There was only one city in the early bronze age, about 1900 to 1600 B. C., there were six different cities, one above the other, the first two representing the transition from the early to the middle bronze age, the next four being typically middle bronze. These were definitely distinguished by their pottery."

"The last city on the mound was the city of the Kings of Judah, destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, as is conclusively testified to by the discovery of stamped jar handles which served as tax receipts from King Jehoiakim, who reigned a few years before Nebuchadnezzar's destruction."

"In modern times Nebuchadnezzar stands as the symbol of military ruthlessness although in fact his destruction was less terrible than any of the others of these ten burnings. The Israelites, for example,



destroyed the city at the time of the conquest of Canaan so thoroughly that they destroyed all traces of it, but Nebuchadnezzar left walls four or five feet high."

Dr. Kyle said it was possible to confirm that the Abraham and Lot story was true, because he found a house such as that described in the scriptural narrative of Lot and the angels, with a strong door capable of resisting onslaughts of a mob.

"This disproves the contentions that the story of Lot and the angels was written in King Hezekiah's period in the city of the Kings of Judah about 700 to 600 B. C. because the sociological and political conditions differ," he asserted.

"In the last city on the mound there is evidence of adequate police arrangement in the fact that no doors were found, merely arches with curtains or light coverings, whereas in Lot's time many heavy doors were uncovered, proving the people took their own defense precautions. It is unlikely that a historian of the time of Hezekiah would appreciate such a subtle distinction in sociological conditions proving the biblical narration that Lot actually harbored celestial visitors from the fury of an attacking Sodom mob."

Dr. Kyle said he hoped to resume excavations in 1932 to elicit further conclusive biblical proofs.

#### SYRIAN INVENTS SUCCESSFUL HELICOPTER

Nassif Shibley, a Syrian of Wheeling, W. Va., is said to have invented a successful stabilizing device for airplanes for which patents have been issued to him recently. The device also permits of the taking off and landing of the machine perpendicularly in perfect safety, thus

eliminating the necessity of spacious flying fields.

Shibley is said to have many other useful inventions to his credit. He is a mechanic by trade and has been applying his talents to his latest invention for several years.

#### TRAINED NURSING IN EAST BEGAN AT THE A. U. B.

Nursing in the Near East has progressed in six steps from the first when the grandmother of the family nursed the ailing members to the modern trained nurse, according to Mrs. George Shahla of Beirut, Syria, an alumna of the American University of Beirut School of Nursing.

This School has just celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. In discussing the accomplishment of the school, Mrs. Shahla summarized the six steps in the evolution of nursing as 1—the grandmother of the family, 2—the midwife, 3—the maiden aunt, 4—the Nun with very little special training, 5—the Deaconess with more practical training, 6—the modern trained nurse.

The modern trained nurse in Syria has been the outcome of the School for nursing established in 1905. Before that a few isolated nurses were found but they were either foreigners or Syrians who had been trained abroad. The School began with five girls and the first graduating class of 1908 had three members. Until the close of the world war the school numbered about twenty trainees. Since then the number has risen to fifty-seven including three Persian girls the first to study nursing, and two girls from the Sudan, also the first Sudanese to study nursing.

Miss Jane E. Van Zandt, superintendent of the School for Nursing,

says that one hundred and fifty nurses have been graduated in the twenty-five years and are scattered throughout the Near East though the majority are in Syria, Palestine and Egypt. Many of the girls marry and take an active part in teaching other women in the community how to care for their babies and their homes. A number are doing infant welfare work in Palestine, one in Tel Aviv, one in Bethlehem and several in Jerusalem. One is a school nurse in Ramallah with health classes for children.

One graduate went to a mission hospital in Addis Ababa, Abyssinia, last year and is doing excellent work. Two of the nurses went to a mission hospital in Bahrein, an island in the Persian Gulf, four years ago and did excellent educational work on the island where primitive living conditions were responsible for much preventable illness.

Some of the graduates do private nursing but the majority are interested in institutional and public health nursing. A certain number remain at the University hospital, others enter work in Tuberculosis Sanatoria.

Miss Mary Beard of the Rockefeller Foundation who was a guest at the twenty-fifth anniversary of the School of Nursing commented the work of Miss Van Zandt and said that "the science of preventive medicine and its promulgation among the masses is the greatest contribution of this age to the health and happiness of mankind."

#### AL-HODA MOVES TO BROOKLYN

The Syrians of the United States missed their leading daily paper, Al-Hoda, for a week when it moved its publication plant from 55 Washington St., New York, to 169 Court St., Brooklyn, early in August. That Al-

Hoda did not suspend for a longer period is due to the untiring energy of its management which made possible the moving of the heavy presses and the many Linotypes, together with tons upon tons of paper and books, in what is considered record time for an Arabic publication.

We wish to congratulate Al Hoda upon its reappearance from its new offices and regret that it has given up its old quarters in the heart of the Syrian colony in New York where it made history.

#### ARAB ARGUMENT ON THE WAILING WALL

During the taking of testimony by the Wailing Wall Commission of the League of Nations in Jerusalem last July, Ahmed Zaki Pasha, noted Moslem scholar, presented the Arab case. He read a declaration submitted by the Arab delegation in which it was said that Palestine was not recognized as a "Jewish National Home."

Zaki Pasha then went into Palestinian history, according to the Bible, from the time of Abraham to show that neither Jews nor Arabs were original owners of the country, but the Canaanites.

He submitted documents which he said were from Christian travelers, declaring the Jewish practice was to mourn and not to pray at the Wailing Wall, and he said that statements of other Christian writers that the Jews prayed at the wall may have been made because travelers mistook mourning for praying.

Jews he declared, were turning persecutors of the only people who had never persecuted them. The Arabs, although conquered by the Crusaders, were never expelled from the country, while the Jews, he asserted, were definitely expelled 2,000 years ago.