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# FROM "PROMISED LAND" BACK TO EGYPT.

## Kaiser Wilhelm as Modern Moses Would Send 500,000 Men Back Over Trail Described in Exodus.

BY ARCHIE BELL.

ACCORDING to the oldest historical document relating to the subject, the Song of Deborah, the lady who sat under a palm tree (Judges V), there were forty thousand men capable of bearing arms when Moses attempted to "personally conduct" the Israelitish nation across the Sinai peninsula from Egypt to the promised land. The journey took several years and not many of those who started lived to reach their destination.

According to the announcements from Constantinople, Kaiser Wilhelm wants to send 500,000, or twelve and one-half times as many fighting men from the promised land to Egypt, but he plans to do it in a few months.

According to the thirty-second chapter of Numbers in the Old Testament, only two men in the party who left Egypt, lived to arrive at the end of the journey. If the kaiser's prospective travelers arrived on the banks of Suez in a similar proportion, there would be exactly twenty-five men on that eventful day when they shall meet the forces of the allies and attempt to destroy the canal, wrest Egypt from the crown of Great Britain and weaken British control in India—the three things which it is hoped will "congeal the fighting blood of the leaders of England and compel them, not through force, but through fear, to loosen their strangle hold on the throat of Germany."

But, presumably, the majority of the company with Moses were pedestrians, although there is some mention of officials riding on white donkeys and it is not beyond reason to suspect that there may have been camels in the party, for camels were probably in Egypt at this time, although the monuments make no mention of them, which is explained by the scientists who believe that such mention was forbidden. For many centuries, at least, camels have been the most desirable "motive power" in this region, as they are today. The Sinai peninsula, lying between El Ma'an, where the German emperor purposes to mass his troops, and the Suez canal, is a place practically without water. Even camels must drink and carry water for travelers to drink, but they are able to go without it for a great length of time. They thrive where horses and donkeys die, but the rather optimistic announcement of the Germans does not suggest the possibility of mounting 500,000 men on camels. Great armored motor cars are suggested as a solution to the problem of providing water, and presumably of looking out for the food supply of this vast army, where there is practically no food and no means of providing even the most essential substitutes for what we consider food. Arabian desert Bedouins live and thrive on a small quantity of lentils and sour cakes of green wheat roasted in camel dung. But this diet would not suffice for 500,000 fighting men from Europe and Asia Minor.

The Teutonic-Turkish plan, it is announced, is to form the basis of this supreme attack upon Suez at Aleppo. A part of the distance from Constantinople doubtless may be covered in a comparatively short time. Aleppo is situated in the midst of the great recruiting fields of Asia Minor. Where there are no railroads, thousands of laborers have been crushing stone and paving the way for the horde that is expected to pass that way. Over much of this distance, great engineering works have been going on for many years, and while we have no certain knowledge, it is likely that the way to Damascus has been made comparatively easy.

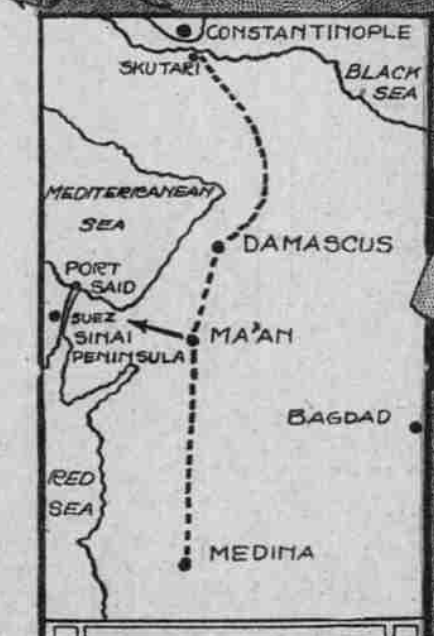
From Damascus to Medina, one of the holy cities of Arabia, runs the Hejaz or pilgrims' railroad. It is a privately owned and privately operated road for the convenience of pilgrims on their way to the tomb of the Prophet and to Mecca, many days beyond, a distance that must be covered by camel. Many writers, apparently English sympathizers, feel certain that the rolling-stock of this little line will not be sufficient to provide transportation for the hundreds of thou-

sands of men who are to be massed at El Ma'an, a station less than 300 miles distant from Damascus. It has about 3,000 inhabitants in normal times, presumably identical with the Melunites mentioned in II Chronicles, xxvi 7. Ordinarily, only three trains a week are run over this railroad, which may have given the impression that rolling-stock is scarce. Herr Diekmann, the German director of this line, told me two years ago that at the time of Moslem festivals at Mecca, he was able to send out trains from Damascus every two or three hours of the day and night, permitting the rolling-stock to lie idle the rest of the time, when it was not needed. This, it seems, would dispose of fears in the direction of quantity.

When Russia was at war with Japan her great problem was to transport men over the Siberian railroad into Manchuria. The total number actually carried, when at full pressure, was about 40,000 men a month. Perhaps the Germans will be able to overcome this difficulty and get the 500,000 men to Ma'an by the commencement of operations in the spring, as threatened. Perhaps adequate provision will be made for their food in this desert city so far away from all sources of supply. Presumably they have looked out for that or they would not make the announcements that have gone out from Constantinople. The possibility of doing so cannot be doubted in view of other achievements of the past two years.

When they leave Ma'an, however, and start westward—that's a different story. The Arabian desert and the Sinai peninsula are so little known to Europe and America, excepting in regard to their history and geographical position, that the announcement in regard to marching a great number of men across to the Suez canal—and supplying them with food and drink by means of motor trucks, sounds reasonable. One optimistic announcement calls attention to the fact that the Arabian desert, unlike the Sahara, is not sandy, but consists largely of sun-baked clay "admirably adapted to the use of motors, which, unlike camels, do not require food and water."

Sun-baked clay, if it chance to be baked to a smooth surface, would be an almost ideal foundation for such a march. But sun-baked clay, through



A VIEW OF PORT SAID.

which great rocks protrude, even in the narrow paths between barren and dry gorges—barely wide enough for a camel to pass—is far from being ideal. The passes are so rough in many instances that a horse cannot keep his feet, and

yet these are horses of Arabia, accustomed to the trail, horses which easily drop over ledges of rock twelve to thirty inches high and strike their balance when given sufficient foot room.

The Arabian desert is a barren land

GERMAN WATER BOXES PLACED AT INTERVALS ON TURKISH DESERT.

of mountains, hills and deep valleys. Perhaps motor trucks could climb the elevation, or pursue their way through the boulder-scattered valleys, but motors of the dimensions now known cannot pass along rocky trails, not more than eighteen inches wide, and there are many such on the way from Ma'an to Suez. Perhaps wide detours would obviate trying to pass, but with such a sun as beats on the Arabian desert (frequently 130 degrees) such a scarcity of food and water, every mile is a tremendously important matter in the transportation of a half-million men.

The Israelites complained to Moses that they remembered the cucumbers and melons of Egypt, as they attempted to struggle along through this wilderness. That was close to 4,000 years ago. Men have become accustomed to even greater luxuries than the cucumbers and melons of Egypt in A. D. 1916. It looks like an impossible, and if not impossible, a precarious undertaking. Even the Teutonic allies themselves would not be pleased with having twenty-five men of the original 500,000 arrive in Egypt. But in all these 4,000 years the nature of the country has not changed to any appreciable extent, excepting no doubt, to become more bar-

ren than it was. Oases have been abandoned, where there were palms, and trails have been covered by the drifting sands. But mountains and valleys are doubtless about as they were when Moses started out from Egypt on his divine mission. According to the news reports, the kaiser entrusts to Leopold of Bavaria this similar mission, and he gives him a much more serious task to perform than that undertaken by Moses. His men will be stocked with provisions, no doubt, as the Israelites could not have been, but there are twelve and one-half years, he will be expected to accomplish his work in weeks, and bring his men to Suez in fighting condition for the beginning of their real offensive campaign in that region.

And to combat their fighting strength they will be met by hordes of Abyssinians, Indian troops, Great Britain and her European allies, who have made voyages in ships to the battlefield. Thus the contemplated attack on Suez seems to be one of the most tremendous moves of the present world war, and one never equaled in this territory where men were fighting soon after they began to inhabit the earth.

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