

# CHRISTIAN CHURCH EVER DEFIES ISLAM

## Light Burns for 13 Centuries Where Moses Met God.

### BURNING BUSH SITE HERE

#### Emperor Justinian Builder of Impregnable Cathedral That Surrounds Sacred Edifice.

BY WILLIAM T. ELLIS.  
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ST. CATHERINE'S MONASTERY, Mt. Sinai, June 18.—Dead ruins are commoner than live institutions in the Near East; but here at the foot of Mount Sinai is a living memorial of the distant past. Far off in the midst of the wilderness that is bounded by the Mediterranean on the north, by the Suez canal on the west, by the Gulf of Akaba and Palestine on the east and by the Red Sea on the south, is something unique—a church and a monastery in a citadel that have been uninterruptedly alive and used for the same purpose for more than 1300 years.

Not once in all these centuries, say the monks, has the light been extinguished that still burns in the chapel built by St. Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, on the traditional site of the burning bush where Moses heard the voice of Jehovah.

That light appeals to the imagination. It is still primitive—a floating wick in a glass lamp filled with olive oil. The gray groves of olive trees in the neighboring garden furnish the oil; a bit of twisted moss will serve as a wick; and there has never lacked a devotee to keep the supply of these local materials replenished. Generation after generation, century after century, age after age, that tiny flame has continued to shine in beautiful symbolism.

Little Light Outshines the Great. During the life of this one small light all the great lights of the world have flickered or smoldered or gone out. This flame has seen the glorious beacon that was Grecian civilization extinguished by the blackness of barbarism. Rome, the greatest of empires, shriveled up and guttered out while this tireless little flame held its worshipful vigil.

Before ever England was a nation, before the sun of the East had set, before the little caravan pushed the wheels of its little caravan into an unknown western sea, this sacred spot was venerable. Kings, conquerors, empires, civilizations have come and gone without so much as causing a flicker of this ever-burning fire of devotion.

In the atmosphere of this unrelaxingly old monastery the centuries seem contemporaneous. These walls stood strong and unconquered before the Latins and Greeks divided when the Christian church ruled Rome and Rome ruled the world. We are carried back to the monastic era of the church fathers, when piety and scholarship fled from the world to caves in these rocks. Their toilsome and beautiful handicraft is still to be found among the library treasures of this monastery.

Then, as now, religious zeal braved the rigors and perils of the wilderness in order to follow in the footsteps of Moses and Israel. Elijah, and, perchance to find God anew at the place of his rendezvous with the Hebrews, gave. These walls were old, as we in the west regard time, when Islam rose in the desert across the neighboring Gulf of Akaba and the monastery withstood that flood.

Hidden Treasures of Centuries. The hereditary treasures of the place—such as the jeweled cross containing within what is reputed to be a fragment of the true cross—remained unmolested by the Crusaders, whose prize looters of history, who later adventured this far in force, although their fingers must have come hither, for their arms are carved in the refectory.

The Reformation was a drama of the outside world to these Greek or Eastern churchmen, who still regard the Roman Catholic church as a schism. Kingdoms have been established, have flourished, have fallen and have been forgotten, while these massive walls of sound stones, built by Emperor Justinian, have been unshaken and unmounted. Something of the awe of Mount Sinai itself attaches to this wilderness sanctuary. Like its own garden of green in sterile fastness, it is a symbol of changeless life and hope amid the wastes of human existence.

Always a place of pilgrimage, St. Catherine's monastery has seen the character of pilgrims vary greatly. Once they were hair-splitting Alexandrians and Byzantines. Later they were palmers from England and France. Afterward came rough men and women from Moscow.

Latest of all to the number of 200 within 10 years, an average of four a day, have appeared a new people, keen to climb the highest peaks and to examine the uttermost antiquity and treasure, the Americans, favorites of the monks, who in peace times see all together only about a dozen parties of travelers a year. It is the Americans who are inciting the monks to install fire prevention and fire-extinguishing devices and to build vaults for the priceless treasures, now hidden away in medieval fashion, and for the manuscripts and books that are beyond all replacement.

Sinai Safe From Tourist Tribes. Mount Sinai will never be a popular tourist resort. Nature has attended to that. Pains and toil are the price that must be paid to visit it, across sandy wastes and through steep mountain passes. There is room for airplanes to land on the uneven and rock-strewn broad plains hidden in the mountains near the foot of Mount Sinai, where the children of Israel waited for the descent of Moses, but flights over the island are rare. Rusty peaks will never be popular. A motor road or a wagon trail seems an impossibility. The camel continues to be, as in the days of the patriarchs, the one popular means of conveyance. This sacred site seems eternally inaccessible, as if designedly shut off from the profane vandalism of the merely curious.

Therain Mount Sinai is unique among notable mountains. Olympus is on the main travel route, through Greece; thousands of Americans have seen it. Arazas, as accessible from everywhere by boat and train. Mount Hermon is just off the beaten path through the Holy Land and a pleasant, easy side trip. The Himalayas and Fuji-Yama have long been a tourist show. But Sinai has for ramparts hot and forbidding deserts and difficult passes through precipitous and forbidding mountains.

Before ever he was chosen leader of

Israel's hosts, Moses knew this region as foot. Fleeing from Pharaoh, after his hot sense of justice had led him to slay the Egyptian oppressor of his Hebrew compatriot, Moses made his way to the mountains of Sinai—even as he did a later prophet, Elijah, when escaping the vengeance of Queen Jezebel. Here he became a shepherd, dwelling for 40 years amid the rugged, rocky ways, and these mount ins. Every peak and every glen became as familiar to him as to the shepherds of today, whom one encounters in the remotest spots. Often Moses clambered over the slippery face of these mountain sides, following his surefooted flocks. When I ascended Jebel Musa—Mount Moses, the traditional Mountain of the Law—I found abundant evidence that sheep and goats, with their shepherds, visit this peak far oftener than do human beings. Doubtless Moses was here as a shepherd before ever he came to the place as a prophet.

His familiarity with the Peninsula of Sinai which Moses possessed before ever he became the deliverer of the Jews from Egypt was, of course, as place as a destination for the Israelites. Mount Sinai, an isolated, rocky island in a black goat's hair tent such as the Bedouins still use. He more nearly resembled in personal appearance one of these mighty sheiks than the august western figures portrayed by Michaelangelo and Sargent. Before ever Moses returned to Egypt he had dressed in the simple and practical garb of the nomads roaming this mountain wilderness of how and where his people might travel and eat for Sinai. Or it may be that the Exodus is colored by the fact of the long residence of Moses amid these granite peaks and defiles.

Propitiate Mountain Spirits. There is reasonableness in the close association of the burning bush with the Mount of the Law. They were both familiar ground to Moses; the Voice in the Bush is a logical place—fore-runner of the Voice on the mountain. No thoughtful person who has traveled these mountains can escape the sense of awe which these magnificent heights impart. Even the most sophisticated has thoughts of the supernatural while in Sinai; that the primitive peoples who dwell here should regard the passes and the peaks with spirits is most natural.

As we cross the various passes, or come to curious rocks, the canyons, the crevices, the immemorial heaps that have been piled by their predecessors. It may be loosely interpreted as a shrine, or a place of prayer, or a place of propitiation and worship of the spirits of the mountains. The same usage obtains as far east as the Hindu Himalayas, where, as a sort of effigy or memorial, important factor in the choice of the practice of setting one stone upon another in the fashion followed by Eliphaz by Jacob and Laban. I find one of these common "pillars" or piles in a photograph of the Jebel Musa. More abstract and lofty were the musing of Moses amidst these mountains. This was the school wherein the great Jewish prophet, when he was later to interpret to his people and to all mankind, Moses and Elijah, and we know not what other prophets of Bible times, found God in these rocky fastnesses. Secluded, suggestive, sublime, Sinai is a scene of surpassing sanctity.

Hermit's Shrine. More than a holy spot, the Sinai mountains were found to be an ideal place for the early Christian monastic refugees from Egypt. Hermit's. Here are caves in plenty and solitude and remoteness from the seductions and snarles of the world. One of the monkish legends concerns a certain Stephan—the whose skeleton has for centuries sat grotesquely at the entrance to the monastery—said that when he lived here in the sixth century he shared his cave on Jebel Musa with a lion, the saint recognizing the sanctity of the recluse.

Neighboring Arabs were not always kind to the Christian hermits. Sometimes they massacred them in numbers, often they persecuted them individually. It was primarily to afford a refuge for these holy men, the story of whose sufferings had aroused the religious zeal, that the Roman Emperor Justinian erected the citadel, in the year 527. The spot chosen, a narrow valley between two high mountains, a poor one from a strategic standpoint, even in those pre-gunpowder days. The ill-equipped Arabs could hurl rocks and shoot arrows over into the monastery.

The reason for the location, however, is obvious; the walls were built around a sacred shrine, St. Helen's Chapel of the Burning Bush. Hard by was the well at which Moses had watered his flock, especially attractive to the men who mated circumstances, this spot would flock—and in the desert wells are the oldest and most persistent of landmarks. At the place where the Voice had come to Moses under such dramatic had fled to this same wilderness in search of the Presence.

That the royal mother of Constantine the Great, famous seeker after sacred sites as she was, turned powerful influences toward Sinai is evident from the presence of various treasures. Beautiful marbles, supposedly from the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, where the Apostle Paul once had a great adventure, adorn the apex of the church, which now adorns the original Chapel of the Burning Bush. Four massive brass candelabra rest on lions that supposedly date back to a pre-Christian period. The mosaic in the apse is historic, but it is not as old as the pillars and capitals of the church. Other precious treasures, gold, silver and jewels, wrought into ecclesiastical ornaments, the monks brought forth from their hiding places to show us.

Into the little chapel of the Burning Bush, the monks have been seen removing his shoes. The traditional position of the bush is marked by a silver plate. There is only one window, and through it once a year, in

April, a ray of sunlight strikes a silver cross. The walls of the room, like those of the church, are covered with icons and pictures, mostly worthless. The centuries have not brought a single great painting to this church; and, to be sure, the monks would not have recognized it as such. Men who hang gilt Christmas tree ornaments upon magnificent bronze chandeliers, the work of artists in metal who wrought their masterpieces from pious motives, could scarcely be expected to appreciate any form of art. The contents of the monastery are a strange commingling of the sublime and the ridiculous, the noble and the tawdry.

Unconquered Citadel Still Stands. That, however, is running a bit ahead of our story. We are first of all concerned with this mighty citadel of cut stones and buttresses and ramparts and towers. A Christian emperor's votive offering. It still stands unbreached, a testimony to the good workmanship of an earlier day. There have been repairs to the upper part, which, the monks say, was left unfinished at the close of the crusades. The walls are so thick that rooms and chapels are to be found inside of them. Nothing short of high explosives could batter down these defenses of a garrison of religious recluses.

When danger threatened, and long before the Amalokites of Sinai attacked the Exodus caravan, there was trouble on this peninsula, and it has continued ever since. The monks could not call for the police or the military. They simply had to remain safe within their own strong walls and live upon their own subterranean stores of food and their unfauling wells of water. From their ramparts they could look down through archers' porches upon the turbulent heathens. They had a secret underground passage into their high-walled gardens.

Ancient Artillery Fired. These militant monks have been prepared to fight all the centuries. Their armament consists of eight pieces of artillery which apparently date back almost to the discovery of gunpowder. Three of the eight have bore the size of a pistol and they are lashed to blocks of wood. Others are about one inch in caliber and have wooden wheels.

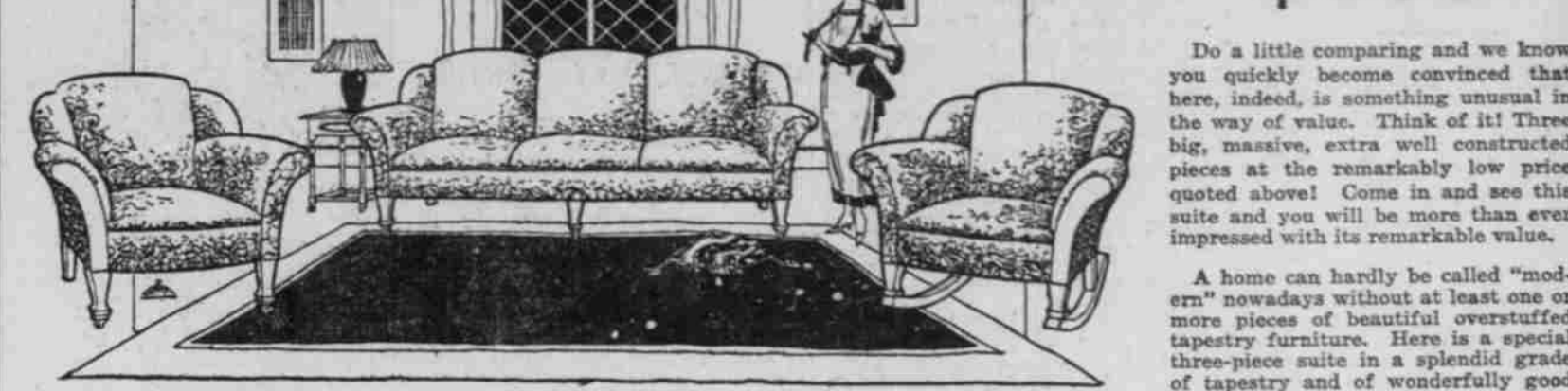
All are muzzle loaders, fired by a match applied to the vent. It looked as if it would be committing suicide for a man to attempt to use one of these ancient derelicts. Nevertheless, when the monks were given a salute of two guns, along with the tumultuous ringing of the monastery bells. The noise, especially that of the whirling of the muzzle, the servant, doubtless prompted by gratitude for American backsheesh, had evidently loaded the old pieces almost to the muzzle.

When the Turks were most menacing during the war the monks secured from the British modern rifles for all their inmates, along with an adequate supply of ammunition.

Entrance to Fort Church by Windlass. Unique among defensive measures is this citadel's method of entrance and egress. This is a doorway, high up on the wall and covered by a wooden shutter through which persons and animals are hoisted up and in by a windlass. That windlass formerly was used for all visitors, and during the present war, when the Turks threatened, it was the only method of communication with the outside world. The illustration shows one of our party being lifted into the citadel. There is now again open, since the advent of the British has brought an assurance of protection to the monastery, the small, narrow, arched side of the citadel. This is only wide enough to admit one person at a time. It opens into a narrow corridor through the massive stone walls, where two heavy metal shated doors with prodigious bolts and locks have to be passed. Then the entrance, still narrow, sharply turns into another corridor to the right, where a third huge armored door swings. Another turn to the left opens into the courtyard. Three men could hold that corridor against a hundred. Verily, it is the church militant which dwells on Mount Sinai.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

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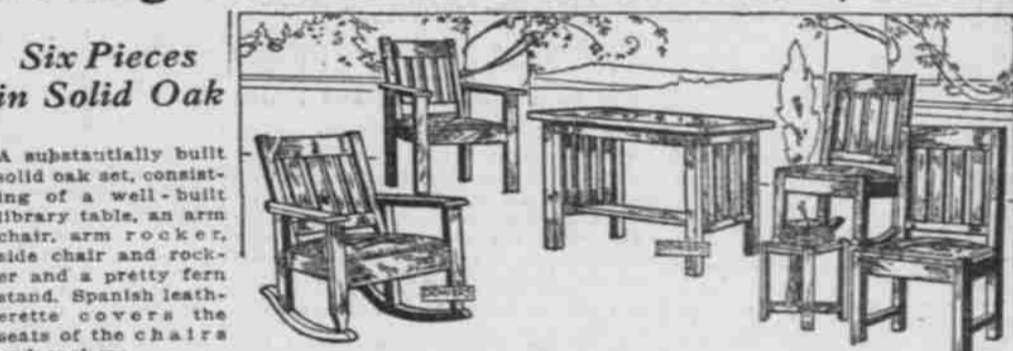
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# IRRIGATION BONDS UPHOLD NORTH UNIT ISSUE CONFIRMED BY DECREE.

Government Geological Expert Arrives to Make Final Investigation of \$5,000,000 Project.

NORTH MADRAS, Or., July 19.—(Special.)—The voting of \$5,000,000 bonds by the North Unit irrigation district of Jefferson county has been validated and in all respects confirmed in a decree by Circuit Judge Duffy in the county clerk's office. The bonds are to be a just obligation for construction and other expenses incurred by the district.

Professor Crosby, government geological expert, arrived in Madras this week to make the final investigation of this irrigation project and to make examination of the dam site at Benham Falls, on the Deschutes river.

The North Unit irrigation district has an area of more than 100,000 acres and comprises one of the finest bodies of dry farming land in Central Oregon.

Japan's Silk Exports \$190,000,000. YOKOHAMA, July 19.—Prices of all grades of raw silk, which dropped disastrously with the beginning of the war, have since mounted far above the high tide of the last ten years. Japan exported \$190,000,000 worth of raw silk last year, it is announced.

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HANDSOME DOUBLE-DOOR RECORD CABINET. FIVE TEN-INCH DOUBLE-FACED RECORDS (TEN SELECTIONS.)

How a Victrola enhances the charm of summer evenings. The older members of the family love to sit and listen to the sweet melodies it plays, while the young people speed away the minutes to dreamy waltzes or popular jazz music.

It Does About Everything but Hang Out the Clothes on Wash Day

# The 'Laundry Queen' Washing Machine

Now, women, own up! Don't you just hate to wash on a hot day, steaming your face and hands with hot suds? Why cling to antiquated methods when you can buy on easy credit terms such a splendid power-driven washing machine as the "Laundry Queen"? It washes all sorts of clothes from heavy blankets to the articles of a woman's wardrobe, and then rinses them thoroughly. Can be secured with either copper or wooden tub. Your washing will cease to be a bugbear when the "Laundry Queen" is once installed.

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in all sizes. One of them will make eating a delight even on hot days, and perhaps avert illness from spoiled food.

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Whoever invented the wardrobe trunk certainly understood how a woman hates to have her pretty frocks and blouses reach their destination crushed and full of wrinkles, as is the case when they are packed in an ordinary trunk. Come in and see our showing of these commodious and necessary traveling accessories.

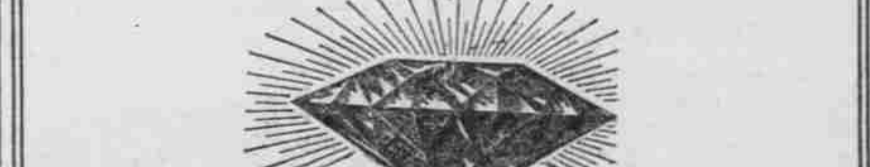
Suitcases and Handbags at Powers

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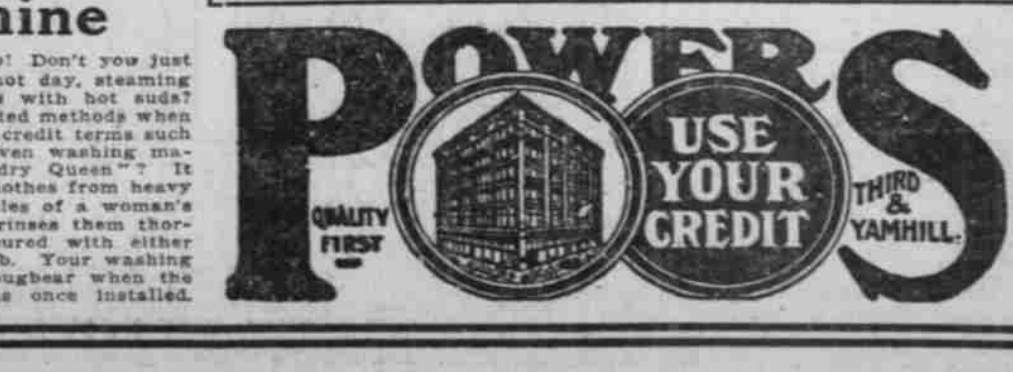
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