

# CRESCENT OF ISLAM IS WANING

University That Was Mother of Modern Science Now a Center of Ignorance and Fanaticism—A Faith's Slow Death.

Of the Copts and their religion Mr. Haskin will next treat. He will describe a people descended from the ancient Egyptians, who are Christians, and who have a vice for every Mohammedan virtue and a virtue for every Mohammedan vice. They have been oppressed for ages, but will not down. It is well to know much about such a people, and Mr. Haskin puts a volume into a short article.

By FREDERIC J. HASKIN.

(Copyright 1909 by Frederic J. Haskin.) Washington, June 5.—The great center of Mohammedan learning and culture is the University of El-Azhar, Cairo. More than a thousand years old, deeply incrustated with reverential tradition, holding to the ancient faith of the Prophet of Arabia, El-Azhar commands the respect of every true believer in Islam. Men come here from Morocco on the west and India on the east, from Russia at the north and the Sulu Islands at the south, to drink in the faith and prepare themselves to become teachers and holy men in the mosques of their distant homes. What Mecca is to the devotion of Islam, El-Azhar is to its militant spirit. From this university Islam hopes to accomplish the intellectual conquest of the world.

The absurdity of these hopes and the fact that the religion of Mohammed is moribund, is proved beyond the question of a doubt to the occidental who visits El-Azhar. The university was once a really great institution of learning. Eight or nine hundred years ago it was the center of that profound Arabic culture which gave to Europe the ground-work of nearly all its present science and learning. To-day, in the brilliancy of the twentieth century, when science has scaled to heights before unimagined, El-Azhar knows nothing of the great advance. Science hated and despised.

Its curriculum consists of the Koran, the Sacred Traditions and the Sacred Law of Islam. These three branches of learning are expounded to more than 10,000 earnest students gathered from the four corners of the Moslem world. Early this year the government, with the active participation of the khedive, attempted to institute some educational reforms in the university. It was proposed to add mathematics and rudimentary science to the course of study. The ultra, the holy men who rule the university, objected to the innovation but the influence of the khedive caused them to give a reluctant consent.

But the English reformers of the Moslem faith had reckoned without their host. The 10,000 students of El-Azhar promptly went out on a strike, picketed the sacred precincts of the mosque and declared a boycott on "scab" holy men and divinity students. The government resolved to compel obedience to its will, and thousands of the striking students were arrested. So far did the authorities go that Moslem soldiers and policemen actually invaded the Mosque without removing their shoes, an unpardonable and horrible profanation of the sacred law.

Fanaticism Turned Loose. Then rose the faithful, young and old, educated and ignorant. The government had transgressed the law. The khedive had been duped by the infidel dogs of Christian England. The students were right. Students harangued the people from street corners. They declared that they came to El-Azhar to learn the faith of Islam that they might teach and preach in the Mosques. They were to be holy men, they did not need to know science. They were not to be mere clerks and counter-jumpers, what did they need with arithmetic? They swore they would not receive any of the infidel Christian's contaminated learning. And all of this in sublime ignorance of the fact that all Europe knows of mathematics it learned from the Arab scholars nearly a thousand years ago.

The students won. The government saw that its effort to reform the sacred university would result in nothing but trouble and that it might precipitate a fanatical agitation against the Christians. Thus ended the great students' strike, and the curriculum at the seat of

## WILLAMETTE UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CLASS.



Graduates from college of medicine at Willamette university, reading from left to right—H. C. Smith, Esther Miriam Silversmith, Earle C. Fox, L. E. Stewart, L. C. Russell, F. D. Lewis, Grover Bellinger, Fred H. Thompson.

learning and culture of Islam again is restricted to the Koran, the Hadith or Sacred Traditions, and the Sheriat or Sacred Law. True, the compromise effected by the government provided for an elective course in other branches of learning, but it would be worth a student's life to defy the will of his fellows and take it.

Sun May or May Not Move. Lord Cromer, the British pro-consul, who ruled over Egypt for a quarter of a century, once asked the head of El-Azhar whether his professors taught that the earth went round the sun, or the sun round the earth. He replied that he was not sure, that some nations held one way and some another, that his general impression was that the sun went round the earth, but that he had never paid much attention to the matter and that the subject was too unimportant to merit serious discussion by anybody. He did not have the boldness of the faith of the Rev. John Jasper of Richmond, Va., who proclaimed that "The sun do move," proved it by the Bible and defied science.

People Willing to Learn. Yet Moslem boys and girls are flocking to the schools provided by American missionaries. Those younger people who do not intend to enter the priesthood have a keen desire for knowledge, and even the conservatives have permitted the introduction of primary school studies into the "kuttab," or village schools attached to the mosque, where nothing but the Koran was formerly taught. But the same families which send their sons and daughters to a foreign school to get a business education will resist with might and main the introduction of infidel science into the great religious institution of El-Azhar. That university is at once the strongest citadel of the faith, and the place where that faith is being slowly but surely strangled to death.

To Abolish Seventh Century. There is a Mohammedan Journal published in Russia, which is devoted to the abolition of Islam and bringing the faith of the prophet into touch with the advancing world. The movement has received no encouragement except from Europeanized Moslems who have been trained in religious thought on the boulevards of Paris, who are agnostics at heart and whose only regard for Islam is political and not devotional. The late Moustafa Kamel Pasha, leader of the patriotic Nationalist party in Egypt, was a devout Moslem, who earnestly desired to reform his faith and to free it from the shackles of 13 centuries of priestly tradition, which has quite covered over the original doctrines and teachings of Mohammed. Once in a while a man will arise in the faculty of El-Azhar who strives to adjust the inflexible code of the seventh century to the rapid progress and constant change of the 20th. But the body of Islam is conservative and ignorant. It will not be moved.

Conversion Means Atheism. It has been proved in various portions of the world that the Mohammedan religion cannot adopt occidental civilization and survive. To Europeanize a Moslem means to rob him of all faith. That is a serious thing to do for while one agnostic may be an exemplary man, a people without a sheet anchor of faith is certain to sink. So

few Moslems have been converted to Christianity that the record is not worth repeating. In Turkey, in Syria, in Egypt, in India, in Central Africa, wherever the missionaries of the cross have gone they have made many converts, but not from Islam. The Mohammedan is a monotheist and he believes in one God. The Trinitarian theory of orthodox Christianity offends his monotheistic sense. If Christian civilization shakes his faith in Islam it leaves him without any belief whatever. What the second and third generations will be or will do remains for time to show.

To Change Is to Abandon.

Many of the more enlightened and devout Moslems lament the decay of their faith, but admit that they are powerless to arrest it. They know that the inflexible code of religion, social ethics and civil law prepared to meet conditions existing in Arabia 1200 years ago cannot be adjusted to present conditions. They know that the faith is inflexible, that the holy men have taught for uncounted generations that the whole law must be obeyed, and that none but God can change the rules in the slightest degree. They know that they cannot change the law without pulling down the whole structure of the faith, and that they cannot square the circle. They realize that the crescent of the true faith is being dimmed in the firmament by the still rising sun of an advancing civilization, nurtured by a religion which is elastic and which is ever changing to meet new conditions. They do not believe in the Christian faith, but they are powerless to answer the defiance of the modern soldier of the cross when he cries, "In hoc signo vinces."

The Woman Question. Furthermore, the civilization of the 20th century will not brook the degradation of women, which is a concomitant of the Mohammedan religion. The prophet himself said, "Paradise is under the feet of mothers." thereby recognizing the influence of women as the greatest in the world. The prophet also taught that women have a future life and in his own life he was so impure, and his picture of heaven was so bestially sensual, that the good parts of his teachings have been forgotten and the bad alone remembered. He permitted plurality of wives, setting the limit at four, but he also permitted concubinage without limit, numerical or moral. The women of Islam are degraded into slaves. They must veil their faces and submit to their masters in all things.

The Deadly Schoolmaster. Fifty years ago there was but one woman in Egypt who could read and write. Now there are tens of thousands of girls in the schools. Even the educated women do not desire emancipation from the harem. They are sorry for the European or American woman whose husband cares so little for her that he will permit all men to look upon her face. But at the same time this conservative woman is not insensible to the advantages of education, and she has found out that actual rivalry to wives is contrary to the teachings and practice of Christians. These girls being educated now will be the mothers of a future generation of Egyptian Moslems. It is hardly to be believed that they will confirm their sons in the ancient faith with the old time rigor and piety. Islam is being attacked by the public school system. It will exist for centuries, perhaps, but it is already in the decline and never again will its sword cause the world to tremble with fear.

## SALEM NAMES QUEEN



Miss Bertha Allen, Salem's Rose Carnival Queen.

Experiments with ostrich farming in Australia, the eggs being hatched by artificial incubation, are successful.

## SMART DOG EARNS HIS LICENSE MONEY

Flint, Mich., June 5.—Charles C. Fitzhugh, a local pharmacist, claims he has the only dog in the country that pays his own license, and the dog earns all the money.

"Max" has a repertoire of tricks which he performs when customers whom he knows enter the store where his master is employed. He plays dead, talks as best he can, says his prayers, walks lame, etc., for the money there is in it.

All the money the dog earns he keeps in a box at the rear of the store, and when an inventory was taken there was more than enough to pay Max's license. He now wears a 1908 tag and is afraid of no dog catcher on earth.

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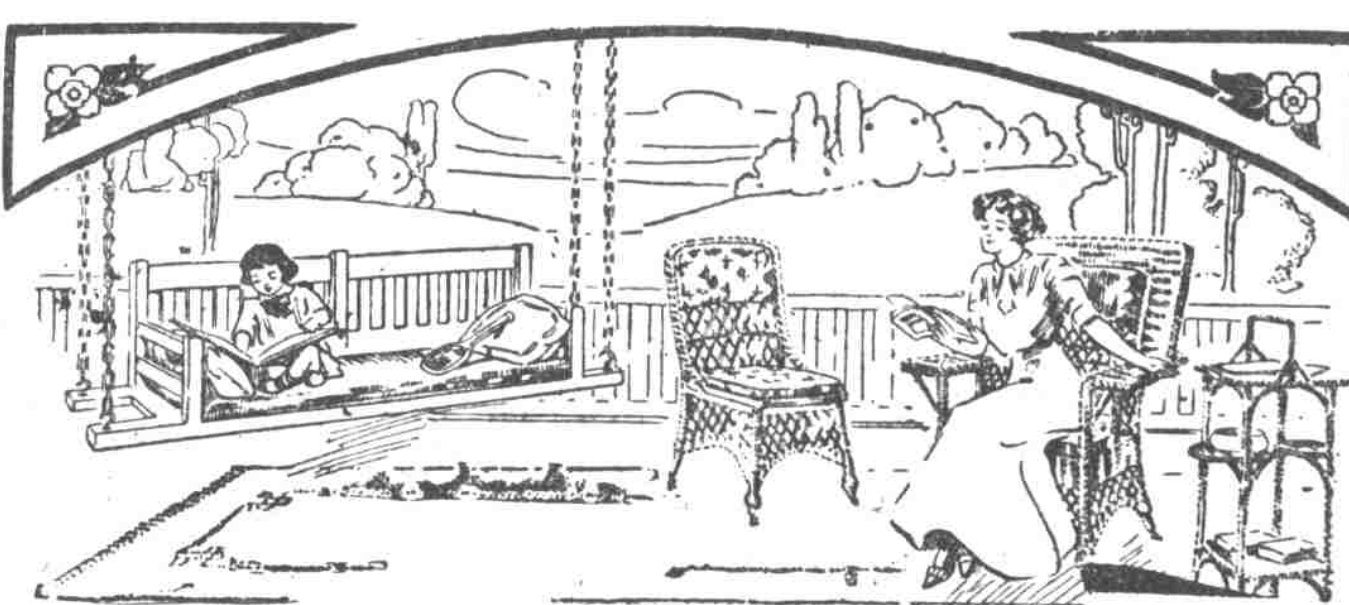
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