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News and Notes

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Series XVIII

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1st January = 30th Rajab (7th Mo) 1348 A.H.

The Agha Khan.

I HAVE been asked several times in the last few days just who His Highness the Agha Khan is. As this question has been raised by otherwise well-informed people, and there seems to be considerable confusion about him; as he and his little French sugar-lady are attracting the interest of the novelty-seekers, perhaps a brief review of the facts regarding him will not insult the intelligence of members of the League.

Then again there are some of us who believe everything we read. A few days ago, I read in the *American*, one of the popular periodicals of the United States, something most absurd about the "Agha Khan, who, as you know, is *the head of all the Muhammedans of India*—" (the italics are mine)! Some of our popular writers seem loath to let a mere fact spoil a good story. But as the article was called "Fringe of the Fantastic," perhaps the author can justify himself.

The Khojas are a branch of the Ismaili sect of the Shi'ahs. There is no time, and little need, to here go into the doctrinal implications of the Shi'ah conception of the Imams, and the Hidden Imam. The Khojas have contact with the Imam in the person of the Agha Khan, who is the descendent of Hasan Ibn Sabbah, the founder of neo-Ismailism, described as "half schism, half reformed Fatimism." The Agha Khan, is the forty-seventh Imam, the first being Ali, the husband of Muhammad's daughter, Fatima.

There were in 1921 some 76,000 Khojas in India. Of these about 33,000 recognize the Agha Khan as Imam, consider his person as sacred (to the point of calling him also an *avatar* of Hinduism), and pay enormous sums of money to him. His adherents are largely

centered in Western India, in Sind and the Bombay Presidency. Others of his group are to be found in Zanzibar and the East Coast of Africa.

It will be remembered that His Highness has taken a great interest in the political situation in India. His book, *India in Transition*, is a masterpiece of diplomacy. He is a nationalist of a sort, keeping, at the same time, on very good terms indeed with Government. Strange to say, considering the peculiar tenets of his sect, he seems to have a great deal to say about Muslim solidarity.

His Highness the Agha Khan, then, holds his title by courtesy from the Empire, his religious position by heredity, and his fabulous wealth from inheritance and the tithes of his people, augmented by whatever favors *Qismet* holds out to his racing thoroughbreds. He is virtually an incarnation of God, without, apparently, the obligations thereunto attached; a Prince without the inconvenience of a Kingdom; a millionaire with vast estates and a brand new wife. What more could a man want?

A Tribute to Canon Sell.

THE Central Literature Committee for Muslims (Cairo) recently sent its good wishes to Canon Sell, the veteran scholar and Islamist who continues to work at Christian literature for India in his ninth decade! The following reply has been received from one whose energy and devotion puts younger workers to shame:—

It is very kind of the Literature Committee to send me such kind words. It is a great encouragement. I do not feel that I deserve such praise. I only wish I were a good Arabic scholar. My only gift, if I may say so, is, I think, the habit of dealing simply with difficult matters. I have always in mind young missionaries who are learning.

Just now I have ready for the press a booklet on "The Messianic Hope" and one in the making on "Sin," both for our Indian pastors. The one on the 'Ayyub and Mamluk Sultans is nearly ready. When I can get these off, I think I might do one on Inspiration for our pastors.

We learn that the S. P. C. K. of Cairo have in the press an Arabic edition of Canon Sell's little introduction to the Book of Job.

A High Priest on Tour.

(For information concerning the Daudi Bohras, see Lane-Smith, in *News and Notes*, Series XVI, page 34; Arnold, in the *Encyclopædia of Islam*, etc.—Ed.)

HIS Holiness Sardar Syeda, High Priest of the Daudi Bohras, is on tour in Sind and Baluchistan. He resides in Bombay (though formerly at Surat), and has some 5,00,000 followers scattered over India, Africa, and other countries. He ascended the "throne" in 1914, having been chosen by his predecessor, as it is the custom of each High Priest to select the one to succeed him just before death. The one succeeding conducts the funeral service of the deceased High Priest, and thereby declares his right to the Gadi. The office of "Sardar" was conferred upon His Holiness by the Nizam of Hyderabad State.

One who knows Sardar Syeda very well says he is a man of peace. He urges upon his people to do good works, observe their religious duties, and help the poor; and not to expose a brother who is in fault, but keep quiet and let others find out for themselves. On this point, however, they would differ with many Christians who feel it their duty to expose evil for the good of all. The Golden Rule implies clearly that we should protect others from an evil person as we ourselves wish to be protected. We can only do this by reproving, rebuking and exhorting with patient teaching.

The followers of His Holiness yield absolute obedience to him. My friend who has attended a Roman Catholic School and was for ten years a Municipal Councillor, speaks good English and is an Honorary Magistrate, says he respects His Holiness so much that he would kill himself if the High Priest told him to do so.

The High Priest has a special *Bogi* carriage for himself, his two wives (one wife is not on this trip with him), one elderly European nurse, several children (ten altogether), and his Secretarial Staff of several persons. Other carriages are reserved for men members of the Bohra community, who are accompanying His Holiness from Karachi and Hyderabad and Quetta. He must stop ten days in each place, where there are large number of Bohras.

The Bohras, like the Mehamans, are converts from Hinduism. The Bohras claim to have descended from the Rajputs. Many of them are descended from Gujeratis, and, like the Parsees, speak Gujerati. Quite a large section of the Bohras live in Burhanpur, Central Provinces, and have broken away from the authority of Sardar Syeda Sahib, because they are not willing to accept the teachers he appoints. He is kindly towards them, and hopes that they may return to his authority. He has several charities, among them a hospital in Bombay, boasting eight nurses. It is believed that he gives away much that is given him. All gifts on tour are his own, however. He looks simple and devout, about middle-age, unspoiled by Western dress. The train is held up for evening and morning prayers, while 100 Bohras joined their High Priest in prayer to the God of Muhammed.

G. B. THOMPSON,
Karachi.

The Wayside Pulpit.

Reported from the C. L. C. M. Office, Cairo

ON the garden railings of the house which gives hospitality to the Central Literature Committee's Office, the C. M. S. Cairo are making an interesting experiment which is shared in also by the American Mission Girls' School, Faggala, in the same city. A small poster is prepared by pasting a Bible picture, neither large nor costly, but coloured, on to a sheet of paper on which is written in bold thick letters an explanation of the picture, and a reference to some book which tells more about it, the price of the book being clearly stated and passers-by invited to buy a copy. This is hung on the street railings at eye-level and the bowwab is supplied with a few copies of the book in question.

The results are very interesting. I am told that in the course of a year no pictures have been defaced or stolen, individuals or groups have paused all day long to read the notice, and a steady trickle of sales has been the result. The Cairo S. P. C. K. which originated the "wayside pulpit" has just received the following letter in Arabic from a Muslim passer-by:—

"I came to Cairo on June 25th to look for work. I searched in vain, though I had letters of recommendation. I tried to get a job in the Tramway Company or the Water Company. (Here follows a long account of weeks spent in searching for work.)

At last, in despair, I thought I would leave the city that very day.

It happened that I stopped at the holy door, the door of the English Church at Baulac, and I found a poster on it about a Christian publication. The poster said:—

CHRIST THE CONQUEROR OF ALL OUR FEARS.

BY THE LATE REV. J. MACINTYRE

and I asked the bowwab (gate-keeper) for a copy of this pamphlet. And I began reading in it as I walked, about the love of Christ, and was still reading when I found myself opposite the Irrigation Office of Giza and Gezira.

And I remembered that the pamphlet said, "Christ is the Hope of the weak," and I was a man that day needing hope, and I lifted my face to heaven and made a prayer, saying,

"Oh Christ this hour I rely on Thee and ask from God and from Thee help in the reception of my letter of recommendation for a situation."

And as I finished my prayer the bowwab came up and I gave him my letter which had been written to recommend me to the Boulac Water Company. He took it from me and gave it to the Chief Engineer, who sent for me at once and gave me a job, through the blessing of God and Christ, and fear was cast out from me.

On September 23rd, I returned to the Church and stood at the door as before, and found a notice this time about the Lives of the Prophets, and I asked the bowwab for a copy and took from him the Life of Abraham, and I greatly enjoyed reading how our Father Abraham visited Egypt, and the whole story of his life.

And on October 4th, I returned and found a notice about some

extracts from the Gospel, and obtained copies of three Parables of Christ which show how God welcomes the repentant.

And I understood and believe and confess that Christ is the great Peace-bringer."

The writer goes on to say that he wants to buy the rest of the "Lives of the Prophets" and to know the people of the Church personally. He gives his name, school, certificates and address.

We believe that in other cities than Cairo and on other gates and railings than those now used, a "silent evangelist" might hang, and the Central Literature Committee's Office will most gladly pass on information as to the cost of suitable pictures, etc.

Aligarh University Ideals.

(From the PIONEER)

THE following is the text of the speech delivered by Dr. Nawab Masood Jung Syed Ross Masood, Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, on assuming charge of the Vice-Chancellorship before the members of the staff and the students of the University and of the Intermediate College:—

"I have given you all the trouble of assembling here to-day as I was anxious to offer to you my heartfelt thanks as soon as ever I could for the very cordial manner in which you were kind enough to welcome me.

"Standing as I do within a few yards of the tomb of the great founder of this institution, whose blood runs in my veins, and on the very spot from where he was accustomed to address those who, with implicit faith in him and in his wisdom, came here to be educated, it is impossible for me to describe to you adequately how the solemnity of this moment overwhelms me.

DREAMS.

"In coming to you I have only answered the call of my blood, and I have come not only to my own people, but also to the very environment in which I was myself nurtured. These buildings that surround us grew up with me. Almost the very first sounds that reached my ears when I came into this world were those of the masons busy building this great symbol of Muslim effort in the cause of education.

"Thus, gentlemen, it is impossible for me to feel that you are strangers to me, and I trust and hope that it will be equally impossible for you also to feel that in me you have one who is a complete stranger to you. The dreams that you students are dreaming to-day are dreams that I too have dreamt, and like you, I too have known that anguish of the soul which is the common heritage of youth in this world of ours.

"Here let me tell you that I have always felt sorry for those who have denied to young men the right to dream, for such people have failed to understand the important part that dreams play in the process of achievement. Indeed this very institution is the result of the pious dream of a sincere man. Remember that a nation that sees no visions is a nation that has no imagination; and a nation that does nothing to make its visions a reality is a nation that is dead.

FAITH.

"I refuse to believe, in spite of what is being said to-day and in spite of appearances, that my great community is dead. I refuse to believe that we, who have in us the blood of those who were makers of empires and givers of law to mankind, have lost our judgment, to such an extent that we can no longer distinguish that which is harmful from that which is beneficial. Had this not been my belief, I would not have accepted the invitation of my community to come and take charge on its behalf of this University. This invitation came to me at a time when I was ill and suffering from much physical pain, and I assure you that had my faith in my community and in you young men of my community, not been what it is you would not have seen me here to-day.

"I come to you full of hopes. I come to you filled with the most ardent desire to serve you to the best of my ability; and if I succeed with the help of God in being of some real service to you, at least one of my dreams will have been fulfilled.

UNITY.

"There are days of struggle and competition, and only those will survive the strain that can put forth the most united effort. Let our University give to our harassed and only too divided country the great example of unity. Let us banish from at least within our walls all those frictions and petty hatreds which are doing such untold harm to the land of our birth, remembering that nothing that is durable can ever be erected on foundations of hate and intolerance.

"In one sense a true University must be a small universe, and in another sense a mother with a heart big enough to love all those that come to her whether as students, or as servants, irrespective of caste, creed or colour. If, God forbid, we fail to make the Muslim University such an abode of love and intellectual toleration we shall have forfeited our right to live as self-respecting and honoured sons of India; and for this dire result we shall have only ourselves to blame.

"AIM AT THE BEST."

"It is my ambition to turn ourselves into the biggest, the most disciplined, the most educated and the most united army that my country possesses for fighting all those evils that have made India the laughing-stock of the world, and this we can only do if we devote our energies to the fullest development of all those faculties with which God Almighty has endowed us. I want the students of this University to be the best young men in the whole world—best at work, best at games and best in courtesy and decency.

"Remember that with me it is an article of faith that nothing that is second rate should ever exist in an institution that has the name of Muslim attached to it; and I, as your Vice-Chancellor, tell you most solemnly that so long as I remain in your midst in the position to which my community has called me, I shall not tolerate anything, in whichever quarter it may exist, that I consider second rate and therefore ugly and evil. In this matter alone I shall prove a bigot and the very worst of fanatics.

Literature.

Urdu Ka Qaida. These attractive little books now number three in the series. There has been a second edition of No. 1 the story of the Samaritan woman at the Well; No. 2 is the story of the Fiery Furnace (of this notice was made in a previous number); and now Miss Chapman has brought out a third, the story of the Paralytic. Miss Chapman writes:

"They are written especially for the needs of those who are teaching zenana women to read, but will be found equally useful for adult classes, supplementary readers for Primary Schools, and for selling in the streets. Each one has a definite Christian message, so they are really permanent tracts. We are hoping that every colporteur and Christian worker will add them to his or her stock of books for selling. They are cheap and attractive and will sell very readily, because the people are crying out for literature—especially simple reading matter. We trust this series will be another nail in the coffin of Indian illiteracy."

These little books may be had through the Book and Tract Society, Poona, and the Methodist Publishing House, Lucknow. The price is only $\frac{1}{2}$ anna each.

NILE MISSION PRESS.

The Reverend H. J. Lane-Smith asks that again we call attention to the fact that the Hindustani Mission, Bombay, has an agency for the Nile Mission Press, Cairo, and that a number of useful Arabic Christian publications are on sale there. There are also a few copies of two books in English from the N.M.P.—*What God hath Wrought*, @ Rs. 2/8, and *Spiritual Seed for Spiritual Need*, @ Rs. 1/9. A list of these books is available through Mr. Lane-Smith, at Ashton Lodge, Bellasis Road, Byculla, Bombay. It is hoped that those who can make use of the Arabic or the English publications, will make use of this Agency.

"The Moslem World."

A REQUEST has come for two back copies *The Moslem World*, namely, the issue of October, 1911, and that of January, 1917. Mr. Coan will either pay for these copies, or exchange any of the following, of which he has extra copies: October, 1912; October, 1918; April, 1920; October, 1922; July, 1925; April, 1926. Address F. S. Coan, Esq.

Y. M. C. A.
Alexandra Road,
Secunderabad.

Pray!

LET US PRAY earnestly for the opening of the Lahore School, for the staff, and those who will be the first to study; that this may be a year of accomplishment to which we have looked forward with eagerness.

"HELP us, our Father, to make the New Year a Christian year, rich in realizations of the truth as it is in Jesus; new indeed in its growth in the life of vision and service. Whatever be Thy will, may we serve Thee faithfully till the shadows flee away, and we awake in Thy likeness."

Important Notice.

HENRY MARTYN SCHOOL OF ISLAMICS.

Please note that the School will open on the 21st January and not on the 25th January as previously advertised. The Principal's address will be:—

THE HENRY MARTYN SCHOOL,
Mahan Singh Bagh,
Lahore.

New Members.

Rev. R. M. Dunkelberger,	United Lutheran Mission,	Rajamundry.
Rev. J. R. Fink,	" " "	Sattenapalli, Guntur Dist.
Rev. L. W. Slifer,	" " "	Repalle, Guntur Dist.
Rev. J. R. Strock,	" " "	Guntur.
Rev. P. E. Paradesi,	" " "	Rajamundry.
Rev. C. W. Oberderfer,	Ohio Lutheran Church,	Guddur, Nellore Dist.
Miss F. S. Smith,	C. E. Z. M.	Ellore.

Any notification of change of address, names of new members or remittance of subscription, etc., should be sent to the Superintendent, Orissa Mission Press, Cuttack, India, and *not* to the Secretary of the League. The annual subscription to the League is Rs. 2-0-0 (English 3s. od.).

Matters of interest to members of the League items of news and request for prayer should be sent (if possible early in the month) to the Hony. Secretary:—

Rev. M. S. Pitt,
Methodist Theological College,
Jubbulpore, C. P., India.

