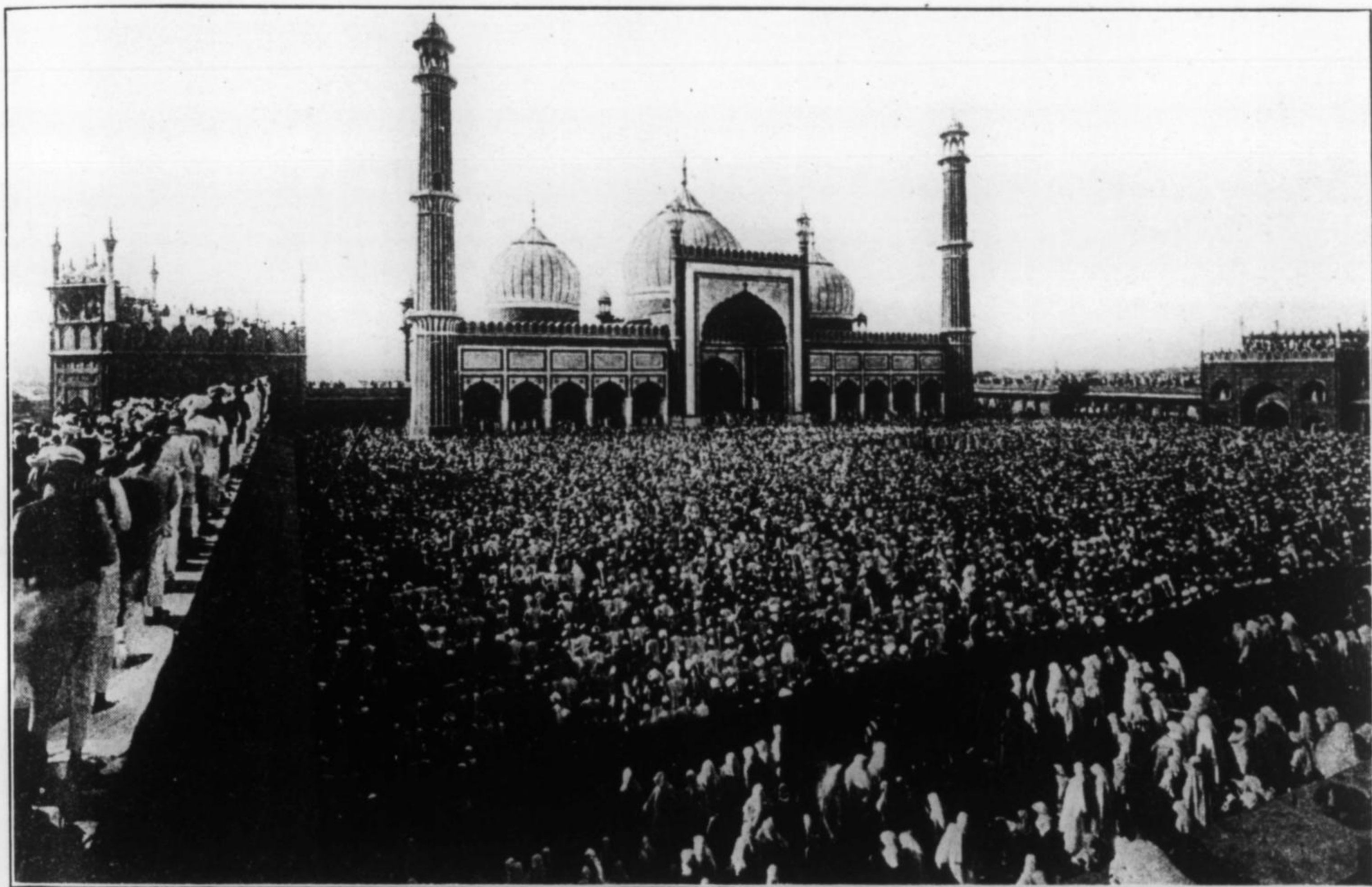


divine, and without a parallel in Mohammedan or Hindu literature. He felt his need for Christ because he was conscious of his own sin. As his experience deepened he learned the power of God's forgiveness, and he found the joy of the new life welling up within his heart. The Cross of Christ became the center of his faith.

The Maulvi discovered what was

Abd-ul Kerim realized that if he openly became a Christian his father would disinherit him and he would have no means of support. So he wrote to a missionary, asking for a position with a salary. No answer came. A second and a third time he wrote, but without response. He learned later that the missionary had been suspicious of him because of the financial nature of the request.



MOHAMMEDANS AT PRAYER IN FRONT OF THE GREAT MOSQUE, DELHI, INDIA

passing in Abd-ul Kerim's mind and took him to another school, so as to break the connection with Christian influence. But the new school was situated near some marshes, and Abd-ul Kerim soon contracted malaria. Exhausted with the fever, he returned home, where he earnestly asked to be sent back to Hazar-i-bagh. His father was suspicious of his purpose, but finally agreed because at Hazar-i-bagh there was a fever sanitarium, and it was an inexpensive place for an education.

What a situation! His father was suspicious of him; his Mohammedan teachers were losing their regard for him; the missionary to whom he turned for encouragement did not venture to reply! But Abd-ul Kerim did not lose heart. He applied for admission as a patient at the fever sanitarium, and the very missionary who had not answered his letters received him. Yet he did not disclose his identity. He reflected that he could study the missionaries a little longer while he was con-

valescing, and as he grew stronger he undertook regular studies, constantly thinking over the life of Christ.

After six months he chose a certain day and went to the missionary in a straightforward way to tell the whole truth, and to ask for baptism. The missionary was astonished to learn that this was the young man who had written him three times. He examined Abd-ul Kerim fully about the meaning of confessing Christ, and told him of the temptations and hardships which were sure to follow; but he expressed his willingness to perform the service after certain weeks of preparation. Abd-ul Kerim assured him of the firmness of his resolve, and promised to come each morning for instruction. Meanwhile he wrote to his father, telling him of his decision.

Shortly after this he united publicly with the Church in Hazar-i-bagh. A group of Moslems, banded together by oath, came to capture him; but the missionaries advised him not to leave the premises, and the Moslems did not venture to enter by force. They, however, sent a telegram to the Amir of Afghanistan, who happened to be in Calcutta. This proved a fruitless appeal. Then his father's friends subscribed a fund of twenty-five rupees and four annas, and engaged a teacher who should visit him regularly and persuade him of the superiority of Islam. The teacher pocketed the money, and made no attempt to see the boy.

Abd-ul Kerim was now nineteen years of age and an avowed Christian. He kept on with his studies and gradually formed a purpose to

master the Arabic language so as to be better prepared to lead Moham-medans to Christ. He wrote letters to thirteen Anglican bishops and other missionaries in Egypt, Syria, and England, asking them to assist him or advise him in carrying out this plan. He had now fully before him the vision of a life-work for Christ among the Moslems of Bengal.

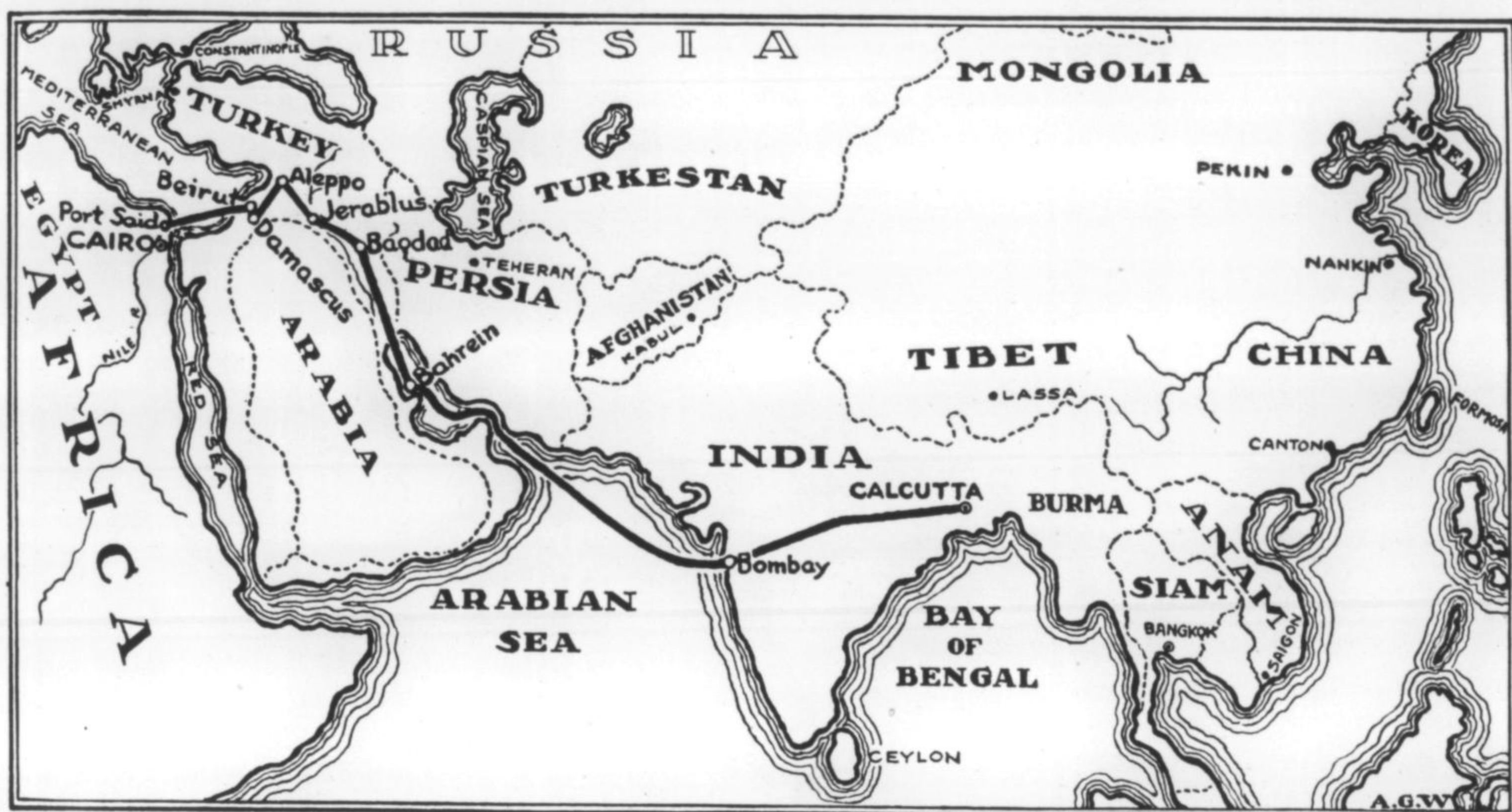
Answers came from several. But the only one which contained any definite encouragement was from Dr. Samuel M. Zwemer, then of the Arabian Mission at Bahrein, in the Persian Gulf. At the same time Abd-ul Kerim addressed a letter to the Lucknow Conference, where missionaries from many countries were gathered. "If any one will take me as a servant or as a writer, I will go," he said. This appeal was not read in the conference, but was referred to a committee, with the result that Abd-ul Kerim received an invitation to teach in a Church Missionary Society school in India, and study Arabic at the same time. He accepted the position, and his teaching went along smoothly, since the Moslems in that city did not oppose him. But he found it impossible to make much progress with Arabic, and began to feel that his life-plans would be indefinitely retarded if he remained. Then he resolved to go to Arabia, to find Dr. Zwemer, and devote his whole time to the study of Arabic. He wrote to Bahrein, and in Bombay received a reply from one of the missionaries, saying that Dr. Zwemer was just leaving America and would reach Bahrein within five weeks. With this encouragement Abd-ul Kerim took passage on a steamer bound for the Persian Gulf.

He traveled steerage, and paid his expenses from what he had saved of his year's salary.

At Bahrein he found, to his dismay, that Dr. Zwemer had changed his plans and was to make his headquarters in Cairo, Egypt, eleven hundred miles farther to the West! For a time the young man worked in the mission hospital in order to meet his living expenses. He swept out the

The friends tried to dissuade him from starting in the great heat, and with such an inadequate sum of money, but finally he resolved to make the venture. He felt that if he did not fulfil his vision and train himself to win Mohammedans to Christ, life was not worth living.

On August 4th he left Bahrein by steamer for Busrah, where he changed to another for Baghdad.



ABDUL KERIM'S JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF KNOWLEDGE

wards and helped to care for the patients.

Abd-ul Kerim was resolved not to give up his purpose and began to inquire how he might reach Cairo, and the cost of the journey. It was now midsummer, and excessively hot—so hot that only necessity led people to risk the noonday sun. "Nevertheless," he said to himself, "if I wait until winter, and then attempt the long journey northward through Baghdad, Turkey, and Syria, I shall surely suffer from the cold, for my clothing is of light Indian material." He still had with him eighty rupees (\$27) of his savings.

Never had he known such heat, even in Bengal! Up the broad waters of the Shatt-el-Arab and through the rapid currents of the Tigris the steamer slowly made its way. It was impossible to secure wholesome food, and when he reached Baghdad, Abd-ul Kerim was suffering from a burning fever. With difficulty he found his way to the Church Missionary Society Hospital where he was given the best of care. For fifteen days he lay exhausted, but, as soon as he was able to go out, he began to plan for the remainder of the journey. He was in the Turkish Empire, and he knew neither Turkish nor Arabic,

so it was a constant problem how to make his wants understood and to find his way.

Then he learned that a caravan was starting for Aleppo, and he arranged with one of the drivers to ride a loaded donkey part of each day. After the caravan had traveled a few marches, the driver repudiated this agreement and compelled Abd-ul Kerim to go afoot. There were no trees on that vast wilderness of parched earth, and often at noon there was no shelter from the brazen heat. Each man lay down by the roadside and covered his head with sacks and rags until mid-afternoon. One morning a donkey loaded with silk went astray and four days were spent in searching for him. The chief trader of the caravan became most insolent, for he saw that Abd-ul Kerim was a stranger and had no friends to stand by him.

For thirty-three days the caravan toiled on, occasionally passing small, dilapidated towns, but, for the most part, traversing endless solitudes in the vast plain. No tents were used at night. The travelers simply lay down upon the stony ground, with their heads resting against saddlebags. The clanging of the bronze bells suspended at the necks of the camels and donkeys often kept the whole company awake during the night hours. By three o'clock each morning the caravan was on the march. It was a hard experience for a boy who had been brought up in a comfortable home.

When the caravan passed through the gates of Aleppo, Abd-ul Kerim counted his money. He had only two Turkish medjidiyes (\$1.70) left, and he had yet before him the long

journey of several hundred miles southward to Egypt. Many a man would have given up in the face of such difficulties; but Abd-ul Kerim resolved to press on. Dr. Piper in Aleppo, and later one of the Americans in Beirut, aided him, so that in two weeks he arrived at the door of the American Mission in Cairo. He was worn in health, his clothes were in rags, and he had only four piastres (twenty cents) left. He was such a strange-looking character that the police became suspicious and followed him to the door. But his faith had grown intrepid and his loyalty to Christ had become marvelously strong. Out of the darkness and despair of Islam he had come forth into the liberty and joy of faith in the Son of God. One of the missionaries went at once to call Dr. Zwemer. "Come into the study," he explained, "and find a young man who has been following you half-way around the world!"

This is only the beginning of a life-story; but it is enough to say that two years of industrious work at the Cairo Study Center, under Rev. W. H. T. Gairdner and Dr. Zwemer, have given the very training which Abd-ul Kerim desired. He has thoroughly studied the Koran, the Traditions, and the History of Islam. He has learned to use his Bible freely and effectively in dealing with inquirers.

His long pilgrimage from the capital of India to the capital of Egypt was made in weariness and loneliness and poverty. His return journey for his life work, *via* Port Said and Aden, is now gladdened by the prayers and Godspeed of a host of devoted friends.