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## The Enemy At The Gates

DR. C. STANLEY G. MYLREA

IN the second book of Samuel, the eleventh chapter and the first verse, occurs the striking phrase "the time when kings go forth to battle." It is true that the last two words are in italics but it is almost certain that the translators had the correct idea and that the going forth was a going forth to battle. As a boy I was often amused by this delightfully naive remark on the part of the ancient historian, who hints that had it not been for certain circumstances over which kings had no control, they would have been "going forth to battle" all the year round. Just as in Russia snow and ice absolutely stop war in winter time, even so in Arabia heat and the lack of water make war almost impossible in the summer time. Then the desert is a burning fiery furnace, and though camels and men can stand a certain amount of it, horses cannot; and cavalry is the most important arm of an Arab fighting force.

The summer was dragging its weary length to a close and the thermometer had ceased to have a maximum of three figures and averaged only about 98 degrees. For weeks the people of Kuwait had been saying "When the heat passes the Ikhwan will attack us." The town had never got over the bad scare of the middle of May when the Ikhwan had attacked Salim's forces in Salim's own territory and captured their commander-in-chief besides a large number of camels and horses. Feeling against Ibn Saud who is the head of the Ikhwan movement had become bitter in the extreme. Kuwait had been defeated once and the next encounter was dreaded accordingly. The Sheikh of Kuwait is a wobbler who seldom knows his own mind. The priceless gift of tact is not his and he can neither make friends nor keep them. He is possessed of considerable personal courage but he is *not* a leader.

Kuwait was nervy and restless. The city, which has been an open town ever since it began to expand and prosper, now rapidly became "a fenced city." The Sheikh caused to be built at considerable expense (not his however), a wall 6 feet thick and 20 feet high which completely

invested the town on its landward boundaries. Where it touched the sea the wall was carried on well into the sea to prevent the enemy riding round it at low water. Platforms, where riflemen could be posted, were let into the back of the wall at frequent intervals while battlemented and loopholed forts were placed about every 300 yards. The whole work is some three miles long and was completed in a little over four months. Like Kipling's kangaroo, the Arab can be quick when "he has to." I omitted to mention the gates of which there are, of course, several, all of them massive affairs of timber and iron. The gates are also forts, for the better defense of these vulnerable points. For all its strength, however, the wall would be of no use without people to man it and so conscription was instituted and every house had to furnish so many men according to its status.

It was on the 8th of October that we first heard anything alarming. The news was to the effect that Ibn Saud's forces under Feisul Dawish were threatening Jahreh, a small town, about 18 miles west of Kuwait. Salim's men were already there—his whole fighting force—but the worrying query was "If our men are defeated, what then?" The conscription was made more rigid, there was a thorough comb out of every house and a few hundred more men were pressed into the service. The walls were manned at night and the gallant defenders kept up their courage by shouting to each other and singing war songs. Ammunition, apparently, was not considered very precious, for rifles were being loosed off all night for no reason whatever, until word was sent around that no firing was to take place without orders. Our sleep at night was fitful for our property is only about 350 yards from the western wall.

On October 10th the crisis occurred. We could hear the sound of distant firing and at once the air became charged with wildly conflicting rumours. Everyone was now thoroughly aroused and young and old, rich and poor, bond and free, streamed past our house "to reinforce those holding the wall and gates of Kuwait, for it was realized that if Salim's force should suffer defeat, Kuwait might be attacked without warning." No one was unarmed and nearly all carried Mausers with plenty of ammunition while some had swords and revolvers as well. One hardly recognized one's friends, for with short white gowns, belted with bandoliers, and with white headcloths and black headropes, people were almost transformed. About noon, the Political Agent called on us and told us that he had heard that Salim was besieged in Jahreh and was in great danger. After a short chat he and I drove over in his Ford to the Main Gate of the city. Sheikh Ahmed was there and assured us that everything was all right and that there was no cause for anxiety. The scene that confronted us, however, gave the lie to his optimism. Refugees from Jahreh and the desert were pouring in at the gate, whole families with their household effects, their camels, donkeys and dogs. A sturdy Bedou girl, her feet firmly braced against the ground, and her lithe straight figure leaning backwards at an angle of 45 degrees, strove in vain to tug an unwilling camel through the

gateway and it was only by the united efforts of several men beating it and pushing it with all their strength that the animal was eventually forced over the threshold. This incident was repeated again and again—the camel loathes gates, not to speak of needles' eyes. Each new arrival was immediately beset by questioners, all shouting at the tops of their voices, and a mere foreigner had a hard time to make anything out of the discordant medley. Sheikh Ahmed would put questions, but was constantly interrupted by anybody and everybody. There was little reverence for the person of the Sheikh even though he is the heir to the throne of Kuwait. Little black Bedou donkeys struggled manfully in, all of them grossly overloaded and mostly invisible from the amount of stuff stowed on top of them. They carried, in addition to household goods, small children, and the blind and aged. Dogs were fairly numerous and very busy and important as they trotted in with their owners. Presently some horsemen galloped in—this looked bad—but was explained away. It afterwards turned out, as one suspected at the time, that these horsemen belonged to Sheikh Salim's cavalry, acting on the principle of *sauve qui peut*. There was one dominant impression I carried away as we drove home and that was, that the town was very nearly in a panic.

At 2.00 P. M. the first wounded arrived—they were all cavalrymen and as they had not stayed to see things through, their news was not as valuable as we could have wished. As the day wore on, the fact became fairly well established that Salim with his main force was besieged in the castle of Jahreh. He had plenty of provisions but no water and things looked desperate. At nightfall we were just sitting down to dinner under the stars when there was a panic at one of the gates and the cry went round that the Ikhwan had got in. Women went silly (so we afterwards learned), and threw their jewels into wells and pits, and the town rocked with fright. I had some little difficulty in pacifying the hospital staff. I rang up the Political Agent as the row was at his end of the town, and asked him for the news. He replied that it was just a scare, some fugitives had arrived at one of the gates, and the sentries took them for Ikhwan—the mistake had been explained, however. On October 11th, reinforcements, many of them Persian coolies, Baghdadis and catch'em aliveo's of all descriptions were despatched to Jahreh by water in the Sheikh's launch. This action saved the day. As all the world knows, there is a lot of luck in war, and the moral effect of the arrival of a steamer, even a small one, was tremendous, coupled with the fact that some six hundred Shammari horsemen who had no love for Salim but a lot of hate for the Ikhwan, had arrived on the scene from somewhere. The Ikhwan who were the attackers and who in their fanatical zeal for death had scorned to take cover, had lost heavily and were unable to tackle the new situation, and were soon suing for peace. Peace was accordingly arranged, and the enemy departed taking their wounded with them. It had been a bloody fight, considering the numbers engaged. The Ikhwan are not supposed to have numbered more than

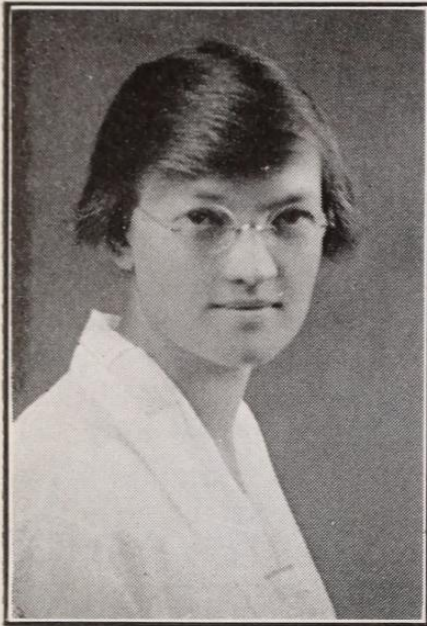
3,500 men but they had lost 800 killed and I have been told that they buried very nearly 800 more who died of wounds. Their wounded with no skilled medical attention, died like flies, and the story current in Kuwait which solemnly explains the high mortality among the enemy wounded, is worth recording. It appears that when the enemy were looting Jahreh while Salim was besieged in his castle, a quantity of musk was found and the Ikhwan, not knowing exactly what it was, and thinking it to be harmless perfumery, wrapped it up with the spoils and saturated all their stuff with its pungent and penetrating smell. Now among the people of Kuwait the belief is strongly held that certain aromatic odors are fatal to the healing of a wound and it is an everyday sight to see people going about with the nostrils plugged up with cotton and asafetida to keep themselves from inhaling these dangerous smells. The Ikhwan wounded had inhaled musk, therefore their wounds had festered and therefore they had died. To the man of Kuwait this is a straight example of cause and effect and admits of no argument.

So much for the enemy's losses. What about Kuwait's! With a smaller force, they got off very lightly. They had had good cover and had used it wisely with the result that they lost only 63 killed in action and about 120 wounded. Most of these latter arrived on October 11th but the worst cases were brought by water and did not reach us till the following day. Nearly all of them came to the American Hospital and I am glad to say that we lost only four of them. The injuries were, of course, various, some insignificant and some very grave. On October 12th, Dr. Mackenzie, of the New York delegation, arrived and he was able to see our small hospital justifying its existence. I was somewhat put out at the way in which the Sheikh took everything for granted, no messages of sympathy and no suggestion of offering assistance of any kind whatever. There was plenty of pious talk and when the twentieth prominent man had told me how God would reward us, and so on, and so on, I boiled over and said "That's all very fine, talk is the cheapest thing in the world. You people pile all this work on me, but it never occurs to one of you to do anything or to help either financially or in kind. In my country, the rulers would be the first to visit the wounded and to do all in their power to see the sufferers have every attention. Here the Sheikh's slaves dump helpless men on the hospital verandah and that is all there is to it—no thought of how my small staff is to cope with all this extra work." I said a good deal more in the same strain. The shaft went home and the next day things began to happen. It was in the morning and I was in the operating room, when one of the leading men of the town, a man who has been a bitter enemy of the American Mission in the past, asked if he might come in. There were tears in his eyes as he handed me a bag containing Rs. 500, and what he said will live long in my memory. It was as gracious a little speech as I had ever listened to. Within three days, I had had 600 pounds rice given me and cash to the amount of Rs. 6,100. "Rebuke a wise man

and he will love thee" was the moral I got out of it. The Sheikh, however, had no part in any of this, nor did he ever recognize in any way what the American Hospital had done for his people. His eldest son, however, contributed Rs. 600.

In the meantime, the town began to grow restless over the possibility of another attack which they fully expected would this time fall on Kuwait itself. On the 18th of October, a deputation arrived from the enemy and gave Salim what amounted to an ultimatum. A council of the chief men of the city was held and Salim was more or less forced, against his own inclinations, to make a formal request to the British Government for assistance. H. M. S. *Espiegle* was already here and the R. I. M. S. Lawrence arrived on the 21st. An aeroplane also arrived on the 21st and a reconnaissance was made in the afternoon to endeavor to locate the enemy. The pilot failed to find them, however, so I asked if I might go out next time, as I knew the country. The offer was accepted and next day at noon, I went up in a D. H. 9. This time we found the enemy all right, counted their tents and generally sized them up. They fired on us but we jumped up to 5,000 feet and nothing hit us. We also dropped a letter for them from the British Government which was afterwards acknowledged by the enemy. On the same day, the 22nd of October, H. M. S. *Ivy* came in with the Acting Civil Commissioner of Iraq on board, Sir Arnold Wilson. He at once held a council on board the "*Espiegle*" at which were present, the Senior Naval Officer of the Persian Gulf and the commanders of the various warships in the harbor, also the Political Agent of Kuwait, also the airman and myself. Plans were made, covering all possible contingencies, including the evacuation of the wounded and the British subjects in the town, besides matters of defence and stores. Sir Arnold returned to Basrah next morning by aeroplane. On the 24th of October, everything was quite ready and on the same day the Ikhwan envoys left Kuwait. The town now calmed down, it had thrown its responsibilities onto the British and was breathing easily. The British were, of course, relying on Salim's co-operation had hostilities recommenced but it is doubtful if they would have had a whole-hearted co-operation. Their idea seemed to be "Let's sit still and see how the British do this job." Sir Arnold Wilson looked in once more on the 24th but only stayed overnight. On the 27th of October, the Wing Commander flew down from Baghdad, accompanied by a second machine. I was asked to go out with him, which I was glad to do and we were able to establish the fact that the enemy had left their camp and though we flew a long way beyond their camp, we failed to sight them. The enemy had therefore cleared out. Another aeroplane reconnaissance was made on the 31st of October and again no trace was found of the Ikhwan. One by one, the warships left and last of all, on the 6th of November, the "*Espiegle*" left. The danger is over for the present, but the causes which produced the battle of Jahreh are still in existence, and those causes cannot easily be removed. Chief among those causes are territorial ambition and religious fanaticism.

## THE RECRUITS OF 1921



RUTH JACKSON  
Westfield, N. J.



RACHEL JACKSON  
Westfield, N. J.



CORNELIA DALENBERG  
South Holland, Ill.

The Misses Jackson are already known to readers of "Neglected Arabia." In 1918 they went out to Arabia and for a year served as honorary missionaries in the Girls' School at Basrah. Returning to America in 1920 they volunteered for full time service in the same year and now go out as regularly appointed missionaries of the Board.

Miss Cornelia Dalenberg is a trained nurse of three years' experience in the West Side Hospital, Chicago. Her home church at South Holland, Illinois has already pledged her full support, and she therefore goes out with strong backing at home to the medical work which has been so peculiarly effective in Arabia.

## Intolerance In Inland Arabia

DR. LOUIS PAUL DAME

**W**HEN important events are taking place it adds to one's interest considerably to have met some of the actors, especially so if some of these actors are playing a leading role. And anyone at all familiar with affairs in Arabia at present is only too keenly aware of the fact that the Ikhwan and their political leader Abdul Aziz, Ibn Saud, the Sheikh of Nejd, are drawing considerable attention. A trip to Riadh the capital of Nejd at any time would be interesting but at the present time is doubly so.

On November seventeenth, with Ali and Mohammed, two of Dr. Harrison's Moslem assistants, I left Bahrein in a native sailboat carry-



THE HARBOR OF OJEIR

ing rice to Ojeir, the port of entry for Hassa and Nejd. From Ojeir we rode on donkeys to Hofhuf, the capital of Hassa. We rode from late afternoon until about mid-forenoon the next day. The thing I best remember of that ride is that the night was cold and long. Anyone who thinks that the Arabian desert does not get cold I invite to take that ride during winter with a north wind blowing.

In Hofhuf we called on the Sheikh, Abdulla Ibn Jalooie, cousin and appointee of Ibn Saud. There is probably no more interesting figure in all Arabia than this man. Hassa was formerly anything but safe for

life or property but now, thanks to his swift, stern, and sometimes cruel judgment, it is as safe as the average rural district at home. The present crime waves in New York and Chicago would have a sudden slump if punishment were as sure as it is in Hassa. Ibn Jaloie is a firm believer in "spare not the rod" nor does he forget the lash and sword. He has done such a thorough job educating his subjects to a life of rectitude and respect for their neighbors' property that now he has little to do along that line.

It is said that when eight years ago he was appointed by Ibn Saud his executioner had a task to perform almost daily. Some of the leading citizens complained to Ibn Saud about this. Upon inquiry he received the following answer from Ibn Jaloie, "If you like, you are welcome to come and rule this obstreperous place yourself and I will change places with you in Riadh." He retained his place in Hassa. How well I remember the fixed gaze of his small black eyes upon me as I thought, "this is that terrible Ibn Jaloie, the terror of all the Bedouins."

From Hassa we travelled per camel to Riadh. We had five camels for ourselves and cases of supplies and two Bedouins were our guides. What a waste the desert is! Not till the evening of the fifth day did we arrive at a habitable place, and that only a temporary one.

Abu Jafahn is the name of a group of wells in a stony part of the desert. It was dark when we arrived but by the light of the moon we could see hundreds of camels lying all around, small camp-fires glowing and groups of Bedouins around each one. Here, as everywhere, my men tried to persuade me to keep in the background, to cover up my American clothes, especially my leggings, with my Arab *abba* for here were many Bedouins and a Bedouin in Nejd is an Ikhwan, and an Ikhwan is the most bigoted and intolerant individual on earth.

We soon had our place picked out and a fire made and food cooked, while visitors came constantly to drink our coffee and tea and to see the stranger. And strange to say each one had some ailment. However bigoted these people may be, they cannot entirely hide their natural childlikeness and curiosity. They will manufacture some complaint just to see the doctor and have him tell them something or give them medicine.

The next morning we left the wells with a large caravan also going to Riadh. They carried rice and piece goods and had been travelling for fifteen days from Hassa. This part of the desert is quite hilly and we reached the highest part shortly after leaving Abu Jafahn. To the right of the road was a deep valley with a precipitous and rocky path downwards. Ahead the road was winding, descending so steeply that the camel men had to stand at each bend to guide the animals as they cautiously went down with the heavy packs on their backs.

Our camels were right behind the other caravan and as several of their camels had stopped and were obstructing the road, one of our Bedouins called to one of the men to get his camels out of the way.

In answer he glared at me and then like a clock that was well wound up he began a lengthy speech. His text was, "Is not this road the road of the Mussulman?" And nothing more typical of a Mohammedan's attitude could one experience.

Just a week and a day after we had left Hassa, exactly at noon we came to a little hill and looking ahead we saw Riadh lying in the distance. The tops of the many date trees hid practically all the city and were pleasant to see. Oh, how beautiful was the sight of something green after having spent eight days in a desert waste. Nothing ever seemed so green before. And as we drew near and saw the wheat and alfalfa growing among the date gardens it seemed as though we had been delivered from captivity.

The city of Riadh is enclosed by a square mud wall about twenty feet high which has many small loop holes for rifles. Four gates, one on each side, permit entrance. It is by no means a large city, each wall being about half a mile long. The permanent population is approximately three thousand but there is of course a very large floating populace.

Two things stand out prominently to a stranger—it is a city of idlers, and the Ikhwan are the predominating influence.

There are, of course, a few people who work, and the busiest person of all is the Sheikh himself. Sheikh Abdul Aziz is by far the finest Arab I have met. He is at least six feet two, powerfully built, possessing a most intelligent face and a very charming smile. He is most kingly in his bearing. There is never any mistaking the man. And he is not an idler. He sits in a *mejlis* (reception room, of which he has many), and receives his subjects, rich or poor, Bedouin or townsman; all can come and present their troubles or their gifts. Then he sits in his office, where he keeps four secretaries busy, and reads the official mail and dictates his affairs. The Arab is not naturally a democrat, but there is a democratic spirit to this government. It has much of the old patriarchal type.

The idlers I learned to despise. It is said that about seventy per cent. of the population live at the expense of the Sheikh. Of course, a large number of these are servants and retainers of various kinds, but quite a number are of the royal family, not the immediate family but distantly connected and like to flaunt their royalty. An illustration may describe the type. One evening I was called out to see a little colored girl. Among the many in the room was a young man about twenty who attracted my attention by his profuse greetings. I immediately put him down as wanting something. As we left the house he walked down the street with us and told one of my assistants that he wanted the doctor to call at his house some time to examine him. The next evening as I was starting out on another call, a servant came saying I was wanted in a certain Saud house. My assistant whispered to me that it was for the young fellow we had spoken to the night before. I told the servant that since his master was not sick in bed, he could come to me at the hospital where I held a clinic every morning, since