

is the case under Bin Sa'ud's regime today), the fight for life is a particularly severe one, when he is not provided with an occupation to enable him to earn. Year in, year out, the poorer type of Badawin—and there are many tens of thousands of such—never gets a 'square' meal according to our standards. He probably has meat only when he can cadge it off somebody more fortunate than himself, or when his shaikh gives a dinner party" (pp. 55, 56).

But he loves them in spite of their faults, and faithful are the wounds of a friend. Envy and cupidity are the besetting sins of all the Arabs, and

"dirty as he and his wife always are, theirs is the dirt of the field, a thing totally different from the dirt of the town. He never washes his clothes till they are about to drop off, and then he replaces them. He and his good wife are covered with body lice, and reek of camel manure and other choice odours, but the important parts of their body are kept clean, and the wife bathes her hair once a week in she-camel's urine, and thus rids her head of vermin for a few days" (p. 56).

On every page and in every incident of their experiences Colonel and Mrs. Dickson show their deep love and warm sympathy. They show not only love and sympathy, but an unusual insight into the spiritual and physical needs of the Arab.

The author in several places pays high tribute to the work of Dr. Dame and Dr. Mylrea of the American Mission in the hospitals at Kuwait and Bahrain. His pathetic plea for more hospitals should find response. The three great oil companies in Eastern Arabia have first class hospital facilities for their thousands of employees, but the interior provinces are still neglected and there is urgent need for pioneer medical missionaries.

As regards Islam, this volume is realistic although not always penetrative. The author's chapters on the Pilgrimage, funerals, marriage, and birth ceremonies, especially those on blood revenge and war, are very informing. He is a careful observer. Yet knowledge of the Koran and orthodox tradition would have thrown light on the *chiaroscuro* painting of Islam so primitively and precisely practiced in Desert Arabia.

Except for a strange dream he had, foretelling the discovery of oil in Kuwait (pp. 332-333) Colonel Dickson has nothing to say of this modern Western invasion of Arabia and its immense importance on the economic and social life of the Arab. The motor car is displacing the camel, the derrick overshadows the mosque, and the worship of Mammon threatens that of Allah.

In spite of its rather high price this book will find many readers. It is in every way attractive. The glossary (of 36 pages) is also valuable, and the fourteen appendices include important studies on Arabian genealogies, lists of tribes, the varieties of fish, insects, etc., and notes on a Himyaritic inscription found in the Northeastern desert.

Our only major criticism of this great study of the Desert Arab is that in some places the author seems ignorant of the Koranic sanction for the practices and superstitions he describes. The Index is inadequate, and the transliteration of Arabic may offend the purist. These, after all, are minor matters. In its own field this volume has had few predecessors and no equal.

S. M. ZWEMER

CURRENT TOPICS

Islam and the Modern Moslem

By Omar A. Khadra

Mr. Khadra is a young Moslem who is related to the leading family of Jerusalem and who spent his childhood among pious Moslem People. After completing advanced studies at the American University at Beirut and Princeton, he now is advisor to the Saudi-Arabian delegation to the United Nations and is engaged in diplomatic work in Washington. He is a representative of a large group of young Mohammedans, who are loyal to the faith of their childhood, but are confronted with the problem of adapting it to the modern world.

EDITOR of the *Bulletin of the Near East Society*

"Islam, like the two other monotheistic religions, has evolved and progressed throughout the ages. Although it has become more complex and varied, it nevertheless has added invaluable wealth to its treasures.

"From the start Islam has been a dynamic religion. Some writers say that Islam is an inflexible religion, and that Moslems in general are not amenable to reform. That is not true. The Moslems of the Near East, especially the educated ones, are conscious of the need to re-examine the role of their religion. They do not intend to undermine the basic tenets of their religion, nor do they plan radically to alter its contents. Their sole aim is to introduce reforms that will adapt Islam to modern life.

"The writer proposes to consider the subject of his religion by breaking it up into three major components. The first is the relation of Islam to the political situation in a country (the problem of Church and State). Second is Islam and its regulation of secular matters, and third, the problem of religion *per se*.

I. "Just as the proponents of the High Church theory have argued that the Pope, as vicar of God on earth, combines in himself spiritual and temporal authorities, so many of the religious leaders of Islam maintain that the two authorities are inseparable.

"The modern Moslem takes exception to such an interpretation. There is no need to offer a rebuttal to this religious theory. This has been done by the religious leader, Ali Abd al-Razik, in his book *Islam and the Fundamentals of Authority*.

"The modern Moslem is convinced of the soundness of the interpretation of the theory of the two swords, as advocated by Pope Galesius I at the end of the fifth century. The need for a surgical operation is all the more necessary because of the spread of the concept of nationalism in the Near East.

"For better or for worse, nationalism has replaced religion as the mode of allegiance. No better example can be cited than the Arab revolt of 1916, when Moslems rebelled against the authority of the Caliph, and fought on the side of the Allies in the first Great War in return for a promise of independence.

"To assume that Church and state should not be separated is considered not only deleterious to the interest of the nation, but is contrary to the spirit of our time. Islam is not, and should never be, a theocracy. Furthermore, separation is the more plausible since it should eliminate completely the feeling of sectarianism which in the past has been fostered by foreign powers for political purposes.

II. "With regard to the relation of Islam to secular matters, the modern Moslem undoubtedly is influenced largely by the example of the West. He views matters arising from his personal relations with other people in his community realistically and with a sense of social fairness.

"First, come the marriage customs and the question of polygamy. The modern Moslem not only refuses to condone it; the whole idea is an anathema to him. He is convinced that legislation to outlaw polygamy and make it a criminal offense should be enacted.

"Similarly, divorce should no longer remain the monopoly of the male; or, as in some, though very few cases, the privilege of the female. Divorce, he believes, should be entrusted to a judge appointed by the State. The judge should interpret the law in each case, and use his discretion to grant or reject a divorce plea. In case the judge is convinced that there are strong grounds for the annulment of a marriage, he should be authorized to pass a verdict. He also should rule on alimony and make sure of the care and education of children.

"Inheritance is another problem. There are no reasons why a woman, as the situation is in some cases, should receive half of a man's property, or why a man should get preferential treatment. Furthermore, legislation designed to standardize all matters of inheritance is much needed.

"The problem of the veil has received considerable attention in Moslem countries. The modern Moslem not only fails to see any justification for the practice; he also considers its continuance harmful, since it deprives the Moslem community of half its members. There is no doubt that the unveiling of women and their equality with men would in the long run benefit the whole society.

"Such reforms would take away more and more authority from the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical court and entrust it to national courts of law. This proposal, however, raises the legal question of the kind of law the national courts should follow.

"Some Moslem lawyers contend that a great amount of Islamic jurisprudence could be moulded so as to suit the requirements of the Moslems, and that the only change necessary is to transfer the authority of the execution of the law from religious bodies to their civilian counterparts. Others, however, would rather draw on the West completely.

"Once the need for reform is conceded, then the problem of its character could be agreed upon. Whether these changes should be put through by a ukase issued from above, or should be brought about progressively through education and other channels, is immaterial. The essential point is that the need for reform be accepted in principle.

"It can be observed that in all personal matters, modern Moslems do not differ substantially from modern Christians. Many have been subjected to the same kind of education, and therefore it should not cause surprise to see them arrive at similar conclusions.

III. "Finally, let us consider the views of the modern Moslem toward Islam as a religion. There should be no misunderstanding if he assumes an attitude that can be best described as one of non-