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# NEGLECTED ARABIA

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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