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THE OUTLOOK FOR PEACE

“**M**AKE a joyful noise unto God, all the Earth; sing forth the glory of His name; make His praise glorious,” (Psalm 66: 1, 2). When on the morning of November eleventh, the news spread abroad that Germany had accepted the terms of armistice, a wave of rejoicing spread over the war-wearied earth—even in the enemy’s camps and cities—and hostilities ceased as if under the spell of the Master’s “Peace be still.” The bells of victory sounded the death knell of militarism and the creed of the iron fist that “might is right.” “The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of the rulers that smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke.” (Isaiah 14:5, 6). With the onward march of the Allies, kingdoms founded on arbitrary power and hereditary rights have crumbled and kings and princes have become weak as Samson shorn of his locks. In Europe and Asia today the ancient established order is changing, the fountains of the political deep are breaking up and a new day is dawning.

The question is—what next? It will be many months before any true estimate can be prepared showing what has been gained and lost in this world war. England alone has lost nearly a million men, and in all, probably at least eight million fighting men have died in addition to those who have succumbed to disease, starvation and war conditions in Europe, Asia and Africa. The price paid in men, in money and in devastation and suffering has been incalculable. Is the result worth the cost? That depends on the next steps.

Europe is still in turmoil. National militarism has been dethroned, but the individual appeal to the power of the sword still stands. In Russia the power of the Bolsheviki, with the red flag of the

Makhail Mansur—A Converted Moslem*

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MAKHAIL MANSUR, who recently died in Egypt, was the most prominent convert from Islam and the most able worker among Moslems in Egypt.

It is a quarter of a century since Mohammed Mansur finished his course of twelve years in the world-famed Mohammedan university in Cairo, El-Azhar, and returned to his native town in upper Egypt, a learned sheikh, honored by all. He had been a brilliant student, in many things surpassing his teachers. The Koran he knew by heart as a matter of course, and he had made himself master of the Arabic language and literature, but he had never yet seen a Bible. He had come upon a single verse of Scripture quoted in a scurrilous attack on Christianity: "And this is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." These words had gripped him. He saw by a footnote that they were quoted from the Gospel by John and became anxious to find the whole Gospel.

About the same time he conceived a desire to argue religion with the Christians, confident that he could out-rival them by his logic and learning. He first met a Christian tailor in his town, but the tailor having little learning, took him to the Coptic priest. The priest proved almost equally ignorant. Then they both said, "You had better talk with the Protestants." So he sought out the little meeting place of the United Presbyterian Mission, attended a service and then told the preacher that he would like to appoint a time and place to discuss religion with him. The preacher expressed his willingness, but added that if he really wanted light on these matters he had better read the Bible and pray. He answered,

"I have never seen a Bible."

* From the United Presbyterian.

"Here is one. Take it," said the preacher.

Being of an open mind, even at this stage, the would-be controversialist agreed to do this. Hiding the Book under his gelabiveh (native dress), he went home, and shut himself in his room. He began to read and never stopped all that night. The words of the Book burned like a fire in his heart, he said, an effect which the Koran had never had although he knew it by heart. He soon became a genuine seeker after the truth and often went to the Protestant preacher for help. And in course of time the revolution took place which changed the proud Moslem sheikh into a humble follower of the Nazarene.

Then Makhail Mansur sought baptism. He was very timid in those days and feared to be baptized in his own town. There being some delay or misunderstanding in arranging the matter, he went eventually to the Roman Catholic Mission in another town and was there baptized, taking the name of Makhail, which was the name of the young preacher who had helped him into the light. For some two years he remained with the Catholics as a teacher in their schools, during which time they took him to Rome and introduced him to the Pope as a trophy from Islam. But this journey proved the means of opening his eyes to the hollowness and falsity of Rome, and, when soon after his return his room was entered and his Bible and some other books taken away, he left and came to the United Presbyterian mission in Cairo. A little later he was received into the church there.

For a time he was employed in teaching new missionaries the Arabic language. For the writer's first four years in that land he was his teacher. Day by day we sat together and in course of time were able to converse (for he knew no English) and a friendship grew up which deepened



MAKHAIL MANSUR

as the years went by. One day the lesson took us through the sixth chapter of Isaiah and as we read, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" and the reply, "Here am I; send me," he looked up and said with great earnestness, "I believe that is God's message for me. He wants me to preach to my brother Moslems." The rest of the hour was spent discussing this matter.

Soon after this the way opened for him to begin to speak at night in a small schoolroom. Only a dozen or two attended at first and most of them Christians. After some time he began to give opportunity for questions which rapidly increased the size of the audience and the time came when no building was sufficient to hold the crowds almost wholly composed of Moslems, many of them students from the Azhar. They always heard first a clear, strong, Gospel message, for he had come to know the Bible as well as he did the Koran. Then opportunity was given for questions or discussion of some theme related to Islam. He proved a master controversialist, seldom failing to meet any

emergency successfully. While he spoke with the utmost plainness, he was so unfailingly fair and frank and friendly that even though he did not succeed in convincing his opponents, he always won their good will. How many were definitely won to the truth it is not easy to say, but the minds of very many were opened and the widest hearing gained for the Gospel message. For eighteen years these meetings continued, fluctuating in attendance from a few score to many hundreds, while the preacher was often called to other parts of the country to give his message.

On one occasion he was riding on the train when a Moslem laborer beside him was heard to say: "What a wonderful thing this locomotive is, yet it came from the infidels!" Joining in the conversation Makhail was soon preaching Jesus to his fellow travelers. Not only on themes in which he was an acknowledged master, but on general topics he had a keenness of perception and sympathy, an appreciation of others' viewpoints and a grasp of the philosophy of a situation by no means common.

He was not without his weaknesses and faults, but who, indeed, is? No one was more ready to acknowledge this than himself, as he often did with streaming tears while we talked and prayed together. But his heart was true to his Lord and his life devoted to the Master's service. Many will be found in the Kingdom through his life and testimony. One of these is his own brother, brought to Christ some years ago through Makhail's influence. On his deathbed he charged his brother on his return to Alexandria to preach on a text which he had wanted to use next, "That ye may be filled with all the fullness of God." When some spoke during the last days of the work he had done, he said, "All was of grace." When others said they were praying for his recovery, he said, "Pray that God will do his will in Makhail."