

Antar, the Arab Poet

Like the rest of his poetic brethren of all ages, he had that human failing of falling desperately in love with a beautiful maiden. The happy lady who won Antar's heart was his cousin, the beautiful Abba, for whose sake he fought many a desperate battle, and suffered such humiliation as no warrior of his spirit could be expected to tolerate. It was for her sake that he always forgave the unkindness of his people, as is shown in the following poem, which also proves Abba's beauty:

"The wind that comes from the direction of 'Alumnu Serdy' (i. e., the home of Abba and her tribe) cools the burning love and yearning in my heart; and makes me remember a people to whom I have always been good and kind, but who yet bear no gratitude nor love for me. Had it not been for a beautiful girl dwelling in the tents there, I would never prefer their neighborhood to my solitude. Oh, how beautiful she is. The magic of her glances is such that if she spoke to a dead man, he would arise from his grave. As the sun was setting in the west he pointed to her saying, 'When the world gets dark, let the beauty of your face take my place to bring the light again;' and the bright moon, too, told her: 'Take the veil off your face, because it is like me—perfect, bright and cheerful.' She turned her head shyly and took off the veil, showing the roses on her cheeks in their full bloom, and from within her eyelids she drew a sword as cutting and sharp as that of her father. Even if that sword of her glances is sheathed with its scabbard, yet her eyes closed will pierce the heart all the same. Never before has it been found that a sword could cut while in its scabbard. The home of the 'Miskh' (English, musk—an Arab scent) is beneath her veil, because it needs her breath to make it pleasanter still. And her forehead beneath her black hair is beautiful like the dawn peeping through the darkness of the vanishing night. Her smile like the best wine will make you swoon. Her breast complained against her necklace (he means her skin is so soft and gentle that even a necklace would hurt it). What would I not do for her who possesses such charms? Will fate be for once kind and let me see you again, beloved one? For your sake I will forgive my people anything, even if they shed my blood, and will suffer patiently any hardship to win you."

The translation has been very literal in order that a proper idea might be formed of the highly imaginative mind of the Arabic poet.

Abba's father would not, at first consent, to give his daughter in marriage to Antar, because he wanted to secure a richer son-in-law. There were many noble emirs who were very anxious to win Abba's hand, but Antar's sword always put an end to their aspirations and to their lives at the same time. There is an interesting poem of Antar in which he complains instead of having Abba he has to meet a new foe:

"How often is fate going to bring me an enemy to fight instead of my beloved to love?"

Professor Leon has rendered this portion of the poem thus:

"When I hunger for love, as men hunger for bread,
Fate to me is unkind, for it gives me instead
Of the one I desire, a fresh foe then to fight.
Will the day ever dawn, will it ever be light,
Will I ever possess and fast clasp in my arms
The maid whom I adore, who enslaves by her charms?
'Oh, list to, Allah! as I now to Thee pray,
That on me soon may dawn all the joys of that day.'"

At last nobody dared cross swords with Antar, and he won his beloved Abba.

All throughout his poems Antar proves himself a warrior, bold, brave and generous in the extreme. The following are a few sentences from different poems, and give an idea of his thoughts and poetry.

In one of these he describes himself when he is under the influence of wine (because it is said that wine shows the true character of a person, because under its influences a man cannot hide his real nature.) He will squander his money right and left, but his honor is unstained as ever (thus he emphasizes that this is always his first consideration and that even wine will not make him forget his duty), and he goes on to say, and "when I am sober I am still equally disposed and ready to give away what I have to others" (that is to say he is not, like some, only generous when he is drunk, but it is his habit to be generous.

This form of poetry is very popular in Arabic, and is known as "Ithras" (i. e., caution), that is to say you make a statement, and follow it by another to make your mean-

ing absolutely clear. He had a beautiful way of emphasizing the meaning of a statement by another:

"My people will remember when a foe is knocking at their door, and it is in a dark night that we miss the moon."

Antar is particularly famous as a poet of "Sher Hamasy," i. e., warlike and inspiring poetry:

"Let your sword be always ready to strike; never stay in a land, if you are not properly respected. If a coward advises you to run away when the battle is severe in order to save your life, do not listen to him, but plunge yourself in the hottest contest and reach a place to elevate you, or die a glorious death beneath the shadows of the swords. The strongest of strongholds will not save you from death, if it is your fate to die. It is better to die gloriously than be the slave of captivating eyes. If I am considered a slave my deeds will elevate me to the highest sky; or if the warriors of my tribe deny my lineage, the sword and spear will admit it. I have reached my glorious rank by my strong arm and sword, and not by my birth and the influence of friends. I will drink poison rather than 'the water of life' if I have to bow to anybody. To live in hell is better than in Paradise, if in Paradise you have to suffer humiliation."

Antar always had the greatest contempt of danger and death:

"If death presents itself in battle I will be the first to challenge it; and whenever I enter a fight I never regret having done so after the fight is over."

His death was as noble as his life. Though mortally wounded, he rode his horse and faced the foe single-handed, to give time to his wife to escape to their tribe. None of the foe dared to attack him, and after some time when they ventured to approach the place where he was they found him dead:

"God bless thee, brave warrior, who defended his women folk alive and dead." Such was the remark of his admiring foes when they found him dead and still seated on horseback.

Dr. Leon has rendered the lines thus:

"God bless thee, brave Antar," then they one and all said,
'Thou protectest the weak, even tho' thou art dead!'"

AMERICAN INDIANS PAY DEBT TO NEGRO MISSIONARY

A debt contracted by the Wyandotte Indians of Ohio 100 years ago has just been paid with interest by the St. Regis Indians of northern New York.

The creditor was a Negro. He died in 1821 in the Wyandotte settlement in Upper Sandusky.

With the debt, the debtors or the creditor, the St. Regis Indians had no connection.

Nevertheless, when approximately 4,000,000 people undertook to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the Negro's first visit to the Wyandottes by raising a fund of \$105,000,000 for world reconstruction, at the beginning of this year, the St. Regis tribe doubled the amount asked of them toward the world fund.

The Negro creditor of the Wyandottes was John Stewart. Stewart was born of Baptist parents in Powhatan county, Virginia, in 1784. At 34 he was leading a dissolute life in Marietta, Ohio, when he was converted at a Methodist Episcopal mission, and heard a call to carry Christianity to the Indians.

His first visit to the Wyandottes was the founding of the missionary work of the Methodist Episcopal church. The celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of that visit is the centenary movement of the Methodist Episcopal church in the United States. The St. Regis Indians are participating in that celebration through the St. Regis Indian mission in Hogsburg, N. Y. Louis Bruce, himself a St. Regis Indian, graduate of the University of Pennsylvania and for a time a professional baseball player, is the pastor of the mission.

When the centenary celebration began, January 1, 1919, the St. Regis mission was asked to provide \$2,500 to the world fund.

The mission had never been asked to do anything for self-support. In 1917 the gifts to the church through the mission totaled \$28.

But when the centenary program included it, and it was asked in honor of the Negro who had carried Christianity to men of its own race a century ago, to pledge its share of the \$105,000,000 fund, the response was immediate.

In two days, \$5,100 was pledged in amounts ranging from 10 cents to \$2 a week. Indians are speaking in behalf of the centenary movement.

Twenty-seven Indians of the membership of 70 have pledged themselves to give one-tenth of their income to

the church, in pursuance of the biblical tithing plan.

The final cancellation of the debt of the Indian to the Negro, who was the first Methodist missionary in America, came when it was found that the St. Regis Indian mission was the first church in the Methodist Northern New York conference to complete the centenary drive for the world fund.

BEAUTIFUL HOME AT BARGAIN

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CHICAGO POLITICS SEETHING

Chicago, March 13.—With the placing of the name of Governor Frank Lowden of Illinois, a son-in-law of the late George M. Pullman, as a candidate for president of the United States, the field in the 1920 republican contest has taken on new breeze, and the political leaders have begun to get busy in laying their plans for the final count. In many quarters of Chicago, it is stated that Mayor William Hale Thompson, if re-elected April 1, will become a candidate for president. Mayor Thompson is an avowed friend of the Negro, and was accused publicly by one of his opponents this week, State's Attorney Hone, of "not only demanding the rights of the Negro, which he deserves, but having him think that he is better than the white people." This statement has caused an ocean of comment in Chicago, but not any more so than the announcement by the friends of Robert M. Sweitzer, the democratic candidate, that Julius Rosenwald, the philanthropist, who has always been a republican, that he will support Sweitzer for mayor. Rosenwald is highly regarded by the Negro population, not only in Chicago, but of the entire country, and it is stated that his decision will influence a large number of Negro voters in behalf of Sweitzer, the democrat, who at any rate, has a tremendous personal following among Negroes. That the remaining days of the campaign will sizzle with activity is not denied by anyone acquainted with the Chicago game.

In the meantime, nationally, friends of Warren G. Harding of Ohio, James E. Watson of Indiana, and Myron T. Herrick of Ohio, are busy trying to send out the "big idea" and the national game is warming up much sooner than many had anticipated.

FOR RENT

Five-room cottage, modern except heat, \$20; vacant about April 1. Nimrod Johnson, agent, Webster 1302.

THE MARCH CRISIS

The cover of the March Crisis is a reproduction in colors of "The French Colonials Attack." The edition is an Overseas Number. It contains an article on "The Black Man in the Revolution of 1914-1918" and a memorandum to M. Diagne and Others on a Pan-African Congress" by Dr. W. E. Burghardt DuBois. Three poems appear in the issue: "The Brave Son" by Alston W. Burleigh; "Go, Give the World," by Otto Leland Bohanan; and "Two Poems—War and Peace," by Lucian B. Watkins. Florence Samuels, representing War Camp Community Service, writes of a "Clean-up Day" for the community. There are pictures of M. Diagne, of Senegal, commissioner general of Black French troops, and of the returning troops of the New York Old Fifteenth.

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LA GRANGE, TEXAS

H. L. Vincent, Agent

Mrs. Ada Davis left last new for Port Arthur, where she will join her husband.

Mrs. Coffee, wife of Rev. Dr. I. D. Coffee, is visiting friends and relatives in Houston.

Dr. L. D. Cook and assisting physicians performed an operation on little Willie Harris for appendicitis last Monday.

Mrs. Hattie E. Hatten is visiting out of town this week.

Miss I. V. Sutton left last Saturday morning for Eagle Lake.

Misses Elliott May Dobbin and Sallie Williams are enjoying a much needed vacation after closing their school work.

Rev. J. H. Napier, P. C., of St. James M. E. church here, is continuing his series of sermons through this week.

Sick—Messrs. Willie Harris and James Mosby, and Mesdames Julia King and Ella Phearse, and Miss Thelma Leah Sanford.

The seventh anniversary of Pastor Tillman will be celebrated at Ebenezer Baptist church Sunday, March 9 at 11 o'clock a. m.

Rev. S. A. Tillman preached at Eagle Lake Sunday and Rev. I. D. Coffee at Bethlehem A. M. E. church Sunday.

Regular monthly services were held Sunday and Sunday night at St. James M. E. church by Rev. Napier. Collection \$20.

Last Saturday night friends of Mrs. Dr. V. D. C. arson met and surprised her with a social party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. John Dobbin. Mrs. Carson leaves for her home at Forrest City, Ark., next Monday evening.

The infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Lee died Saturday night, and was buried Monday. Rev. Napier officiated.

Mr. John Killough left Monday last for Houston to receive treatment for his eyes.

MOVES IN OWN HOME

Mrs. John Drewey, 938 North 27th street, will move in her beautiful home at 2217 North 27th avenue about April 1. The home is modern, with heat. The deal was made by Nimrod Johnson Investment Co.

ALL TO BE HONORED ALIKE

No Distinction in Headstones Over British Officers and Men Who Died in the War.

Speaking of the resolutions adopted by the imperial war graves commission, a writer in the London Times says: "From the first it was laid down by the commission that no distinction should be made in the form or character of memorial to officers and men lying in the same cemetery. It was felt that what was done for one should be done for all, and that all, whatever their military rank or position in civil life, should have equal treatment so far as their graves were concerned. Were the erection of monuments left to individual initiative, probably those of the well-to-do would overshadow those of their poorer comrades, to the loss of the whole sense of common sacrifice and service. The place for the individual monument, it was thought, should be at home. Therefore the creation of individual headstones of a single uniform pattern has been decided upon. These headstones will bear the badge of the regiment or unit to which the soldier belonged, together with the name, rank, regiment, and date of death. They should be easy of identification, and will perpetuate the present effect produced by the wooden crosses. As a central monument in each cemetery a cross and memorial stone are to be set up, simple but impressive in character. An inscription for the stone has been selected by Rudyard Kipling."

War Horrors.

Two women were talking on a bus. "My hair became so gray during the war," said the first woman. "I hope it will be all right after awhile."

"I can understand," said the second woman. "It was enough to make any one's hair gray. I am sure you won't add any more gray hairs now that peace has come."

"Oh," said the first woman candidly, "it wasn't exactly because of the war that my hair became gray—that is, it wasn't because of worry; but, you know, the preparation I used to use—was imported—and during the war I couldn't get any of it. I had to let the gray hairs have their way—but now I hope it will be different," she ended brightly.

"What Matters the Road?"

Now and then in Brittany one sees an East Indian, lithe as a panther, peering in at the open door of a cathedral with wistful interest. As Krishna said many hundreds of years ago: "What matters the road if it leads to God?"—Nina Larrey Duryea in Harper's Magazine.

Mangroves Destroying Island.

The island of Aldabra, near Madagascar, is being wiped off the map by the action of the mangroves that grow along the foot of the cliff. They eat their way into the rock in all directions, and into the gaps thus formed the waves force their way.

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