

**OUR MOSLEM SISTERS; A
CRY OF NEED FROM LANDS
OF DARKNESS INTERPRETED
BY THOSE WHO HEARD IT**

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It by Annie Van Sommer & Samuel M. Zwemer

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ANNIE VAN SOMMER & SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

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OUR MOSLEM SISTERS



A MOTHER AND HER DAUGHTER FROM TUNIS

Our Moslem Sisters

*A Cry of Need from Lands of Darkness
Interpreted by Those Who Heard It*

EDITED BY

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AND

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book with its sad, reiterated story of wrong and oppression is an indictment and an appeal. It is an indictment of the system which produces results so pitiful. It is an appeal to Christian womanhood to right these wrongs and enlighten this darkness by sacrifice and service. At the recent Mohammedan Educational Conference in Bombay the president of the gathering, the Agha Khan, himself a leading Moslem, spoke very trenchantly of the chief barriers to progress in the Moslem world. The first and greatest of these barriers in his opinion was "the seclusion of women which results in keeping half the community in ignorance and degradation and this hinders the progress of the whole." Surely the ignorance and degradation of one-half of a community which has a world population of 233 millions is a question that concerns all who love humanity.

The origin of the veil of Islam was, as is well known, one of the marriage affairs of Mohammed himself, with its appropriate revelation from Allah. In the twenty-fourth Surah of the Koran women are forbidden to appear unveiled before any member of the other sex, with the exception of near relatives.

And so by one verse the bright, refining, elevating influence of women was forever withdrawn from Moslem society. The evils of the zenana, the seraglio, the harem, or by whatever name it is called, are writ large over all the social life of the Moslem world. Keene says it "lies at the root of all the most important features that differentiate progress from stagnation."

In Arabia before the advent of Islam it was customary to bury female infants alive. Mohammed improved on the barbaric method and discovered a way by which *all* females could be buried alive and yet live on—namely, the veil. How they live on, this book tells! Its chapters are not cunningly devised fables nor stories told for the story's sake. Men and women who have given of their strength and service, their love and their life to ameliorate the lives of Moslem women and carry the torch of Truth into these lands of darkness write simply the truth in a straightforward way. All the chapters were written by missionaries in the various lands represented. And with three exceptions the writers were women. The chapter on Turkestan is by a converted Moslem; and the two chapters on the Yemen and the Central Soudan are by medical missionaries. The book has as many authors as there are chapters. For obvious reasons their names are not published, but their testimony is unimpeachable and unanimous. We read what their eyes have seen, what their hands have handled, and what

has stirred their hearts. It has stirred the hearts of educated Moslems too, in Egypt as well as in India. A new book on this very subject was recently published at Cairo by Kasim Ameen, a learned Moslem jurist. Although he denies that Islam is the cause, yet speaking of the present relation of the Mohammedan woman to man the author says:

“Man is the absolute master and woman the slave. She is the object of his sensual pleasures, a toy, as it were, with which he plays, whenever and however he pleases. Knowledge is his, ignorance is hers. The firmament and the light are his, darkness and the dungeon are hers. His is to command, hers is to blindly obey. His is everything that is, and she is an insignificant part of that everything.

“Ask those that are married if they are loved by their wives, and they will answer in the affirmative. The truth, however, is the reverse. I have personally investigated the conditions of a number of families that are supposed to be living in harmony, peace, and love, and I have not found one husband who truly loved his wife, or one wife who evinced a sincere affection for her husband. This outward appearance of peace and harmony—this thin veneering—only means one of three things, namely, either the husband is made callous and nonchalant by incessant strife, and has finally determined to let things take their course; or the wife allows herself to be utilized as an ordinary chattel, without uttering a