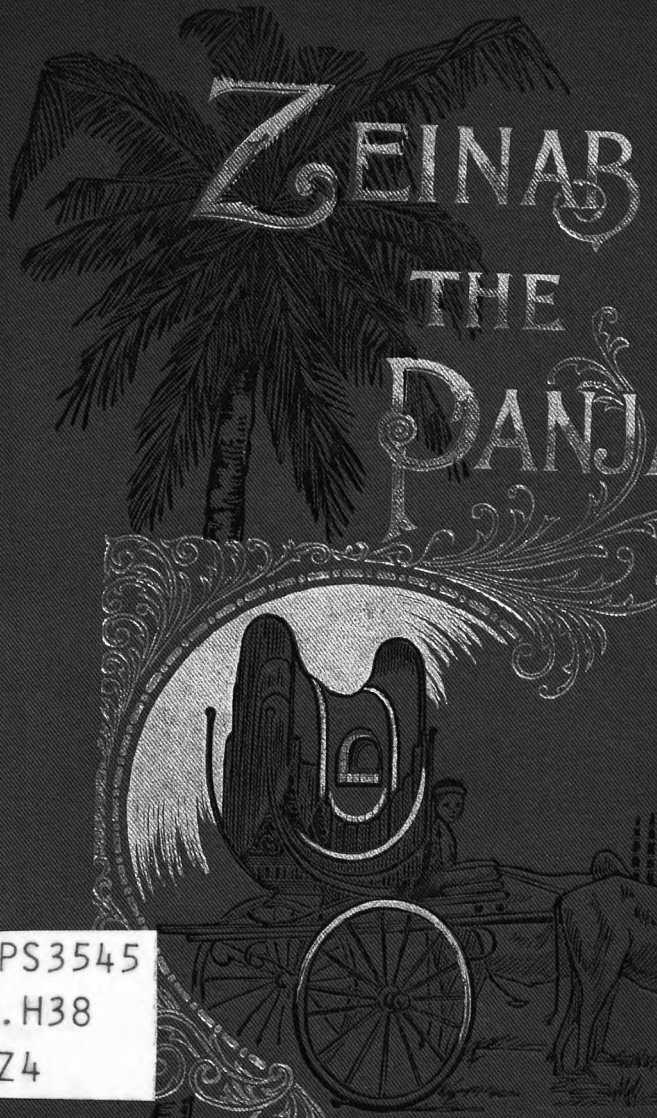


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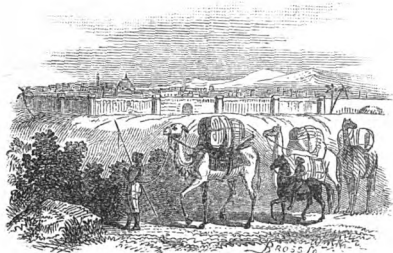


# ZEINAB, THE PANJABI.

A STORY FOUNDED ON FACTS.

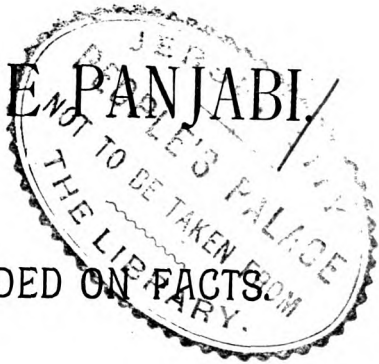
BY

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# ZEINAB, THE PANJABI.

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## CHAPTER I.

THE village of Gunahpur had a history of unusual interest. Years ago it was ruled over by a Hindu chief of great renown. Many a time he had led his brave followers through the stately portals, and gone forth to carry terror into the hearts of his Moslem neighbors. On his return the young men and boys, too young to bear sword and shield, would greet their triumphant townsmen with shouts from the embattlements on their walls. The village bards with pipe and tambourine would gather at the palace-door and sing the praises of their chief. The young women would go to the well on the Common and with firmer tread carry home the accustomed store of water. The tinkling of their anklets seemed to voice their sense of security under so noble a defender.

But the chief had long since gone into the

Dark Valley and there bowed his head to a conqueror greater than he. The village walls and gates had crumbled into partial ruin. The people had been taught to yield obedience to Britain's sway. Hindu and Moslem had learned to live at peace with each other. The husbandmen now went forth from portals never closed to peacefully pursue their humble calling. Green fields and waving grain adorned the wide expanse round about, while to the north loomed up the snow-covered Himalayas. The trees were filled with beautiful birds, while the warmth of the breeze scarce disturbed the calm of springtime.

In one section of this village dwelt a humble worshipper of Allah. Earning his bread by his pen, Abdulla lived a devout life. Five times a day he performed his ablutions and repeated his stated prayers. A son had been born to him, and now the news was brought that a daughter had entered the portals of his humble home.

When Ahmad was born the event was celebrated by many demonstrations of joy. Neighbors called to bring presents and con-

gratulations. Abdulla walked through the streets with a prouder step. But now that the new-born has been declared a girl, how different! It was the will of Allah, and so the devout Abdulla was consoled; for who was he that he should not submit to the almighty decree?

Little Bannu, however, was unconcerned about the views and feelings of her parents and friends; she grew up to be a rosy little prattler, and in spite of the first sense of disappointment her father began to love to hear her bright sayings and to delight in the sight of her pretty sparkling eyes. Bannu was happy because of her father's indulgence, but her happiness was short-lived. Her father had once more to submit himself to the will of Allah, and she looked upon him as he lay silent in death. Her mother and friends and neighbors gave vent to agonizing cries of grief, beating their heads and breasts with their hands. She, too, cried until she fell asleep. The neighboring burial-ground claimed the mortal remains of Abdulla, and now Zeinab and her little son and daughter dwelt in a widow's home.

## CHAPTER II.

ZEINAB soon began to realize the hard condition of a Moslem widow. She was ignorant of the world, and knew nothing beyond the duties of a wife and mother unless it was to knit cotton and woolen socks. Turning over in her mind what she might do to provide food for herself and her children, she could think of nothing unless it might be domestic service, to the proceeds of which she might add a few pairs of socks each week.

Many a time did Zeinab retire to a dark room and there bemoan her widowhood. Ah! if only Ahmad were old enough to take his father's place! But Ahmad had only begun to learn a few of the lessons necessary to fit him for even the humble calling of his father. Zeinab realized that she must assume the place of breadwinner herself. A pious neighbor, sympathizing with the lonely and helpless widow, seriously inquired if he might be able to follow the example of his prophet and give Zeinab a place in his harem; but the expense



of the undertaking convinced him that his project was impracticable, even if Zeinab should be willing to consent to such an arrangement. He therefore quelled his anxiety by engaging her to knit socks, which he exposed for sale in his store.

Zeinab's inexperience made it difficult for her to secure any but the most menial service, and this at uncertain intervals. Ahmad and Bannu could gather enough twigs and leaves from the lanes and hedges to bake the coarse unleavened cakes which constituted their daily bread. Sometimes a farmer would permit them to pluck a few of the lower leaves from the mustard plant, and of these their mother could prepare a savory dish, especially if she were able to add a red pepper to the salt. For clothing, the few garments belonging to the wardrobe of Abdulla furnished material for a while, but the need of a larger income to provide these for the near future became clearer day by day.

Amid all these trials the only consolation afforded to the widowed Zeinab was the constant declaration of the village priest that it

was "the will of Allah." It was written in her *kismet* (fate) and therefore could not be avoided. Often when mourning her sad condition Zeinab would rock to and fro and repeat the words, "Kismet! kismet! The will of Allah! The will of Allah."

At such times Ahmad would inquire, "Mother, who made this kismet?" To which Zeinab would say, "My son, Allah wrote the kismet;" and when he would say, "Allah! Why did he write such a bad kismet for you, mother dear?" Zeinab would cry out, "Allah preserve us from the suggestions of Satan," and then chide the wondering child for his rash questioning. Little Bannu with wide, staring look, half in fear and half in wonder, would say, "But, mother, is Satan here?" To this Zeinab replied, "Yes; Satan comes when we cannot see him and whispers wicked words into our hearts; but if we cry out, 'Allah preserve us,' Satan will go away."

One day Ahmad came home from his search for fuel complaining of being ill. A violent fever was raging in his veins and his head was throbbing with pain, as if it would

burst. An old woman who lived next door said he had small pox. The native physician, taking the widow's last silver coin as fee for services paid in advance, declared that it was small pox. A few days later Bannu was taken with the same dreadful disease. Fortunately the attack was comparatively light in both cases and Zeinab was not subject to the disease, having already had it, as was evident from many deep marks on her otherwise comely face.

Patiently did Zeinab care for the children, and with the aid of medicine brought by a kind neighbor from the Mission Dispensary both children recovered, though they were somewhat disfigured by the marks left on their faces.

The long illness of the children, with the necessary cessation of all effort at self-support and the added expense, brought Zeinab into the depths of poverty, and her lot seemed more sorrowful than ever. Ahmad must now leave his lessons and give himself to such light work as a boy could do.

Fortunately the Mission Dispensary was

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to be enlarged and a small chapel to be provided, where the friends of the sick and such patients as could come for their medicine might listen to the reading of the Bible, or the preaching of the gospel, while they awaited their turn to receive the treatment or the medicine provided by the overworked Christian physician and apothecary.

Ahmad was employed to serve the masons with brick and mortar, and even Zeinab could find something to do in taking care of the rooms of the dispensary.

Bannu here found a little friend and playmate in Miriam, the daughter of the Christian preacher, and many a happy hour did she spend in the little enclosure separating this Christian's home from the noise and turmoil of the street. This too was the will of Allah, and when at night in the humble home Bannu cuddled in her mother's bosom she would say, "Allah has made our kismet good again. Miriam is so kind to me!"

## CHAPTER III.

MEAN MUNAD was the Christian missionary at Gunahpur. A native of Cashmere, Mean Munad had been born of Moslem parents. In childhood and youth he had been taught by the priest in the local mosque. He was first taught to form the Arabic letters in the sand on the shore of a lovely lake which forms one of the chief attractions of the Happy Valley. By-and-by he was given a wooden slate. There were ten or twelve other lads of about the same age in his class. It was a scene never to be forgotten, when the old priest, with his long, grave face, and beard dyed blue after the example of the prophet, clad in flowing robes, sat in front of the semi-circle of grimy urchins, endeavoring to fix upon their minds some high-sounding phrase of the Quran. The boys, rocking back and forward, were repeating over and over the mysterious sentences written upon the wooden slates, screaming at the top of their shrill

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voices and making a horrible discord. Every now and then the old priest would wield his rod threateningly over the head of a boy who would venture to slacken his zeal in learning. More than once he had laid this rod upon the back of Mean Munad, as if to emphasize the solemn teaching which now he felt rather than understood.

Sheikh Muhammad was no ordinary priest. Every one of his pupils realized his awful dignity. Instinctively they lowered their voices in play-time if perchance the stately form of "sheikhji" loomed up in view. They, in common with all the people in the neighborhood, regarded him as a very incarnation of wisdom. Had he not acquired all the learning of the seven sciences? Had he not performed the pilgrimage to Mecca? And, finally, had he not on more than one occasion been honored by the chief magistrate of the district? As an instructor of youth he was noted far and wide. He was, moreover, a severe disciplinarian, but many graduates from his school were now to be found who were proud of the blows of that priestly rod which



had once fallen upon their shoulders: it was another way of saying they had been educated by Haji Sheikh Muhammad! Mean Munad enjoyed this distinction. When a youth of sixteen years he acquired a fondness for the chase, and many a wild animal yielded up its life to his unerring aim. So expert did he become that Capt. Gordon, an English officer, hearing of his skill, employed him as a huntsman to accompany him in his sporting expeditions.

It was while thus employed that a book fell into his hands which was destined to change his ideas of life and give a new turn to his ambition. It was not a large volume, but a pamphlet or tract written by a devoted missionary long since gone to his home above. The reading of this book at first disturbed his mind and aroused his prejudices, for, while it said nothing disrespectful of his prophet or of his religion, it strongly presented the claims of Jesus as the Son of God and the Saviour of sinful men. Mean Munad read it over and over, and the more he read it the more he was drawn to Jesus, the Christ.

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One day he ventured to speak of his interest to his employer. The captain encouraged him to get a copy of the New Testament and to read the story recorded there. This he did when next they came to a town where books might be bought. The reading of the Scriptures rapidly led to a change of faith, and thence to an open profession of his faith by baptism.

Persecution followed. The fiery zeal of the old priest dictated stern methods of reform for the young renegade. First he was beaten, and then imprisoned in his own home. It was a renewal of the old school-day discipline, excepting that now the fate of an apostate awaited the culprit. Friends and relatives, anxious lest they too should come under the ban of religious fanaticism, urged Mean Munad to retract, and at least formally to return to the faith of his fathers. They offered riches and pleasure, and by turns they threatened. But promises and threatenings alike proved unavailing. Realizing his danger, Mean Munad managed to make his escape, and took refuge with his old friend and employer, Capt.

Gordon. With him he passed through the mountain gate of the Happy Valley and soon found himself in the warmer plains of the Panjab. Securing employment in a missionary institution, Mean Munad began to prepare himself for missionary work. Like the disciples of old, who became fishers of men, he now sought to be a hunter of lost sinners.

Many seasons passed by and now he was the missionary at Gunahpur. He had acquired a considerable knowledge of medicine, and had opened a dispensary for the relief of some of the suffering among the poor villagers around him. It was to make his work more efficient that he had secured a native preacher to assist him, and it was for the same purpose that he had undertaken to enlarge his dispensary by adding a chapel, which could be used both for a resting-place and an auditorium.

The work on the chapel was almost finished when one day little Miriam came running into the house, full of excitement, to announce the arrival of Bannu's mother. Hitherto Zeinab had often wished to visit the wife

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of the man who had shown her so much kindness in her poverty, but was restrained by the prejudices of her Moslem friends. Some of them had already expressed surprise that she should have allowed Bannu to play with a Christian child ; forebodings of evil filled their minds : some occult power would be used by the Christians to pervert the mind of the child, and possibly through her exercise a similar evil influence upon the mother too. " Be careful," said they ; " these Christians possess the *evil eye*, and Satan stands ready to help them destroy the souls of the faithful."

Many a time, when Bannu spoke of the kindness of little Miriam and of the goodness of Miriam's mother, she would make up her mind to go inside the enclosure of the mission home and visit her benefactors. Many a time did she reproach herself for the thought that these Christians would inflict upon her or her child any kind of evil. But prejudice and bigotry are strong in the human heart, and poor Zeinab could not easily escape from the influence of public opinion. But Bannu came to her aid. Bannu wanted her mother to see

where she played, where Miriam lived, and many of the wonderful things which Miriam's mother had brought with her from her home in Isaighar, things which the "white ladies" had brought to India from foreign lands. This appeal availed to allay prejudice and the visit was planned for the next day.

Mean Munad, hearing that Zeinab was coming to the house, retired to another apartment and so left the way clear for the visit to his wife. Like the Queen of Sheba when she had visited King Solomon, Zeinab declared she had never heard one half of the truth as to the wonders of the Christian home. The beautiful books and pictures, the strangely wrought slippers and headdresses, the dolls with eyes that would close and open, and the mirrors, the combs and brushes—these all were strange and wonderful to Zeinab. Nothing, however, impressed her so much as the kind interest which Miriam's mother showed for her and for her children. She had inquired as to her health, her home, her need, and her plans for the future. She had proposed to teach Ahmad in the evening, as she

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was then teaching Bannu along with Miriam Zeinab had made up her mind to visit this home again. Her heart had been won by Christian love. She had confidence in a Christian woman who seemed to live just to do good. The world seemed brighter and more beautiful to her. She was able to sympathize with Bannu when she would say, over and over, "Allah has made our kismet good again."

## CHAPTER IV.

“YES, my friends and neighbors, we need an intercessor before God now, while we live. The prophets can do nothing to help a sinner on the judgment day. If we die unpardoned we shall rise in the resurrection guilty and condemned, and the judgment day will only reveal before assembled prophets and angels that the Almighty is righteous when he punishes guilty men. But, blessed be His name, he has provided an Advocate for sinful men, even Jesus Christ the righteous, who died for our sins, and ever lives to make intercession for us.”

Thus spake Mean Munad as he addressed his Moslem neighbors in the new Dispensary Chapel. The old Moslem priest, who had been watching to see who had gone in to listen, now cried out in furious anger, warning the faithful to depart immediately upon pain of the displeasure of God and his prophet. Many of the Moslems obeyed through fear, but some had been deeply impressed by

the words of the missionary. Among these was Zeinab, who with a few of the women had been listening behind a screen in one corner of the chapel. She had been impressed by the thought that Jesus was alive, and in heaven, while her prophet, Mohammed, lay silent in the tomb at Medina. She had once asked the priest if it was true that Jesus was alive in heaven. He looked at her suspiciously, but said, "Yes, Jesus the son of Mary was caught up to heaven alive, to rescue him from the Jews who sought his life." When Zeinab ventured to further inquire whether Mohammed could intercede before the resurrection the priest lost his patience, and broke out in such a torrent of abuse as to frighten her into silence. She was told that she was in danger of eternal fires and torments in the Christian's hell. She was charged with already being a Christian, and warned of the terrible consequences of apostasy from the true religion.

Poor Zeinab returned to her humble abode feeling more than ever sure that the Christian's words were true, and that Jesus must be

the Saviour of sinners. She was, moreover, almost frightened to think her own thoughts. The awful threatenings of the priest filled her with deepest anxiety. She could not forget the malignant and sinister look of the angry priest. The air seemed laden with lowering clouds. Her mind was full of the forebodings of evil: what it might be she knew not, but she was sure that evil would pursue her from that hour.

Sometimes Zeinab was tempted to turn away altogether from her new-found Christian friends and benefactors and seek out the home of her husband's brother, who was a priest in the capital of the province. Once she spoke of it to Ahmad and Bannu; but when she saw how anxious they were to stay she abandoned the idea. Ahmad was able to earn a small pittance and to receive a lesson every day in the mission school. Bannu, too, was learning rapidly, and loved to go to school with her friend Miriam Munad.

Consequently the interests of the children as well as her own seemed to make it clear she should not leave her present abode. Mir-



iam and Bannu had learned by heart the Lord's Prayer and several verses of Scripture, besides learning to sing the beautiful hymn beginning,

"Jesus loves me; this I know,  
For the Bible tells me so:  
Little ones to him belong;  
They are weak, but he is strong."

Bannu used to sing this hymn for her mother, and then in childish simplicity she would say, "Mother dear, Jesus loves you too. I know it's true, for my teacher says so. Oh, I am so glad Jesus loves us!"

Ahmad made rapid progress in his studies. He could now read and write very well. On his birthday the missionary's wife gave him a new turban and folded with it a copy of the New Testament, with the promise of a new book whenever he should have finished reading to his mother and sister the gospel of St. Luke.

Every evening after the day's work was done Ahmad would seat himself by the dim lamplight and read to his mother and sister. Many a time he was obliged to read a page or

a paragraph over again to satisfy the inquiries of Bannu. The beautiful stories of the angels and the shepherds, the Babe in the manger, the Child in the temple, filled the minds of both reader and hearers with intense interest. The wonderful miracles of healing the sick, of cleansing the lepers, and of raising the dead filled their hearts with a sense of the divine love. More than once Zeinab interrupted the reading with the exclamation, "How wonderful! Surely, my children, Jesus can save us from sin. He is alive in heaven now, and can intercede with Allah for us." Thus night after night the little son would read "the old, old story of Jesus and his love." Sometimes Bannu would repeat the Lord's Prayer and sing her little hymn, and then say, "Jesus loves me; Jesus loves you, mother dear, and Jesus loves Ahmad."

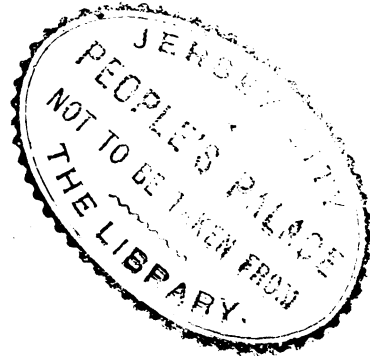
Thus imperceptibly this little family was filled with the Christ life and their hearts were drawn out towards the great Intercessor as their hope of salvation. They attended the chapel services notwithstanding repeated warnings from the priest and some of the more

bigotted neighbors. By and by they began to take part in the singing of such hymns as Bunu and Ahmad were taught in the mission school. At first they would sit reverently listening while prayers were being offered, but after a while they began to bow down with Miriam and her mother and to unite thus in prayer in the name of Jesus.

One day Mean Munad preached on the duty of confessing Christ before men. He spoke in plain, easy sentences so that the children might understand. He presented the invitations of the gospel to the weary and heavy laden, and called upon his hearers to come to Jesus "now," while it is the accepted time and the day of salvation." When the invitation was given for any who believed in Jesus as their Saviour to rise, and thus confess him before men, Bannu arose. Almost immediately Ahmad followed. Zeinab trembled in her seat. She knew her duty, and yet she feared the consequences of open confession. Bannu and Ahmad both looked at her with surprise, hardly understanding their mother's hesitation; but Bannu, turning towards her,

whispered, "Mother dear, wont you get up too? Jesus loves you." Zeinab rose up, hardly realizing what she had suddenly determined to do.

The little Christian company rejoiced. The Moslems present, suddenly rising, hastened from the place, reporting the occurrence in much the same way that one would tell of an outbreak of small-pox. The whole town was soon in a blaze of excitement. Excited groups of people were talking on the corners of the streets. The question was, what to do with the apostates.



## CHAPTER V.

ZEINAB returned to her home with fear and trembling. Notwithstanding all the kind words of encouragement spoken by the missionary and his wife, she could not overcome a feeling of dismay—an apprehension of impending trouble. Ahmad and Bannu clung to her more closely than ever, seeming to enter into the distress shown in the anxious looks of their mother. Though sleep seemed to have fled far away, Zeinab concluded it to be wise to lock her door and retire into the covert of darkness. Kneeling with her darlings she commended them to the care of the Good Shepherd. The children repeated the Lord's Prayer, and were soon resting peacefully in deep sleep.

Though filled with an inexplicable dread Zeinab rejoiced in the confession she had made. She realized as never before that her sins had been forgiven, and she seemed to hear the Saviour say, "As thy faith, so shall

it be done unto thee." The song of the children, "Jesus loves me; this I know," rang out sweet music in her ears. Then the thought came, "If Jesus be for us, who shall be against us?" A quiet sense of security came into her soul, and she too closed her eyes in sleep.

The same evening a little crowd of Moslems, as by common consent, gathered at the mosque. The priest was the spokesman, and all looked to him for counsel. Said he, "I have expected something like this to occur. I have faithfully warned this foolish woman. She has blasphemed. The curse of the prophet is upon her. She may, however, yet be saved from her apostasy and her children may be rescued. Some time ago I took the precaution to write to her brother-in-law, Haji Murad Ali, who resides in the capital, and he has authorized me to take any steps necessary to rescue her and her children from the evil influences of the Christian missionary."

There was a murmur of approval among the people. One of the principal men declared his desire that Mean. Munad and his dispensary might be sunk in the depths of the

sea. Another cried, "But for this infidel government we should soon silence his tongue." "Beware," said the priest, "lest there be a traitor here to report your words." "We shall never permit this woman to be baptized and thus disgrace this town," said another. Thus they lashed themselves into a fury of fanatical rage.

Finally the old priest commanded silence. Carefully looking around in the dim light of a single oil lamp he said, "I desire that you will leave this matter with me. I shall want some of you to help me, but I think it wise that we work silently, so as to avoid suspicion. I have my plans, but their success depends upon your knowing nothing, or at least on your appearing to know nothing. Do you all understand?"

"Yes, your honor," cried several voices. "We know nothing of your plans, and if we are questioned by any government official we shall declare our entire ignorance of everything relating to this meeting. It is no sin to lie if thereby we may further the true religion."

With this the assembly dispersed from the

mosque, excepting three or four who were asked to aid the old priest. Counselling with these in secret, the priest read to them the letter received from Haji Murad Ali, giving him absolute authority to act for him in the endeavor to save Zeinab and her children from apostasy. When their plans were completely formulated these conspirators went forth to execute them.

It was now about two o'clock in the morning. Moving silently in the direction of Zeinab's house, the priest and his companions whispered their plans, each one making sure of his part. Arriving at the door, one of them gently knocked, and soon succeeded in waking Zeinab. Startled by the knocking she asked who was at the door and what was wanted. The reply was given that a telegram had been received from Lahaur conveying the sad intelligence that her brother-in-law had suddenly been seized with a fatal disease, and that if she desired to see him alive she must come at once. To insure her arrival, money had been provided for her expenses by railway from the nearest station.



A dark suspicion crossed the mind of Zeinab. It was as the flitting of a shadow across the window, for it was immediately dismissed when she recognized the voice as that of Haji Khairuddin, who had undertaken to sell the socks she knitted when in poverty, and who had helped her when she was in distress and sickness. Accordingly she arose from her bed and lighted a lamp. Standing behind the closed door she asked the particulars in regard to the illness of her brother-in-law and as to how she was to accomplish so long a journey alone. Haji Khairuddin soon set at rest all her anxieties by assuring her that everything would be arranged for a safe and comfortable journey. "My sister and her husband will travel with you and help you to take care of the children, who must go with you." So spoke Khairuddin, with affected interest in the welfare of Zeinab and her children.

Zeinab was anxious to visit Mean Munad before setting out upon a journey which would no doubt oblige an absence of many days. Her neighbors, however, counselled

haste, as affording the only chance of seeing her brother-in-law alive. To meet the train they must start without delay. When Khairuddin proposed to send some one to the mission house early in the morning, who should explain the circumstances of their sudden departure, Zeinab consented to start on her journey without further delay. Getting the children ready, and hurriedly tying in bundles some necessary articles of clothing, she was soon on her way towards the edge of the town, where an ox-cart awaited them, which was to convey them to the railway station. Ahmad and Bannu did not forget to take with them the Testament and other books given them by Mrs. Munad. They did not like to go away from Miriam and their school, but they could not stay behind when their mother was going away.

At the first streak of dawn, just as the Muezzin's call to prayer broke upon the ear, they reached the railway station. The train was soon to arrive. Hurrying, they bought their tickets, and just as the train came into the station they were ready to enter it. Seat-

ing herself at a window, and having made sure the children were safely seated near her, Zeinab looked out, and to her surprise saw the old priest gazing sternly at her. Her eye quailed before his look. She again saw that malignant glance of the eye which had so often disconcerted her. His presence there at that hour filled her heart with fear. She turned to Bannu, who was gazing fixedly at her. "What is the matter, mother?" she said, "Are you sick, mother?" "No, my child," said Zeinab, "I am not ill, but I am sad and full of anxiety. They tell me your uncle is going to die just as papa did. This makes me sad."

"Does uncle love Jesus?" asked Bannu with childish interest. "No, my child, uncle does not love Jesus as we do, and I fear he does not want us to love him." Looking anxiously in her mother's face Bannu said, "We will tell uncle how much Jesus loves us all; will we not, mother?"

The day passed wearily enough. Ahmad had a hundred questions to ask about the different places they passed, Bannu amused herself watching the children at the various

railway stations. Late in the evening the train rolled into the grand dépôt at the capital city. After all had safely alighted from the train, the guide led the way along a narrow street which led to the home of Haji Murad Ali, a stately brick building, into which they were admitted by a servant.

After being seated on a cotton divan and being refreshed with food and water served by the household servants, Zeinab inquired how her brother-in-law was. Just then a door opened and he walked in, appearing as well as ever, but having a look of unwonted sternness. For a moment they stood gazing at each other. Finally Zeinab spoke, earnestly asking what all this meant. Haji Murad Ali said in a firm tone of voice, "Sister, it means that you are not able to take care of yourself and your children, and that I have felt it to be my duty to assert my authority over you, and so save you from the pollution of idolatrous religion."

Zeinab realized that she and her children were prisoners in the home of her husband's brother.

## CHAPTER VI.

GREAT was the consternation in the little Christian community in Gunahpur when Zeinab and her children failed to appear at the Dispensary on the morning following the events recorded in the last chapter. The anxiety of Mean Munad was intensified when his assistant, Jai Kishan, returned from a visit to Zeinab's abode and reported the house vacant and locked. He could not help calling to mind his own experience, and concluded at once that the Moslems had spirited away Zeinab and her children—where, he could not imagine. Had the man turned up who had promised Zeinab that he would explain her departure, Mean Munad would have been able to assure himself as to her destination, but that gentleman had not the slightest intention of giving any information on that point.

Little Miriam was not able to do much study that day because of Bannu's absence. She would stop in the midst of her lesson to

ask her mother why Bannu did not come to school. When assured she was not sick Miriam seemed more than ever anxious to learn where she was. When later in the day she learned that Zeinab and her children had left their home and that no one knew where they had gone, her distress was greatly increased. She seemed to realize by instinct that she would not soon see the sweet face of her beloved playmate.

Mean Munad set about the ordinary duties of the day. Many came to him from long distances for medicine and treatment. The chapel service was more than ever solemn. The missionary held up before his hearers Jesus Christ as the Saviour. It was hardly an accident which led him to read the passage, "If any man will come after me let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall find it." His discourse was illustrated by his own experience, and as he recounted God's dealings with him ever since he had fled from the

prison-house in Cashmere, he felt a new assurance that the same Good Shepherd would care for those of his little flock who had so suddenly and mysteriously disappeared. His hearers were solemnly urged to take up the daily cross of a holy Christian life rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Some of them were deeply impressed, and a few remained to ask further concerning the new doctrine of the gospel.

In the afternoon Mean Munad and his assistant went out into the town to make inquiry concerning Zeinab. None of the Moslem neighbors knew anything about her or her children. They even professed to have scruples in regard to Zeinab's character. One man went so far as to insinuate that she had probably purloined goods from the store of her benefactor, Haji Khairuddin, who had undertaken to dispose of the socks she found time to knit. When Haji Khairuddin was seen he assumed a mysterious air, but declined to say whether he had had any goods stolen. He expressed regret that Zeinab should have run away, and said he was spe-

cially anxious that the children should not be led astray.

The Moslem priest, having come into the store while this conference was going on, joined his voice to those of the others in expressing his surprise and sorrow that Zeinab should have gone away under what to him seemed to be suspicious circumstances. After spending several hours in search of some clue to Zeinab's departure Mean Munad returned, little wiser for his pains. But on entering his Dispensary he was met by his assistant, who told him that he had met a Hindu, in the employ of the railway, who reported having seen Haji Khairuddin and the village priest at the station early in the morning in company with a woman and two children answering to his description of Zeinab and her son and daughter. Jai Kishan assured himself that they had been sent off on that train. Inquiry at the station might discover their destination. It seemed certain, however, that Zeinab's actions were voluntary. To the Hindu witness she seemed to be under no constraint, though acting under evident excitement.



To Mean Munad the duplicity of Haji Khairuddin and the priest was evident. But of Zeinab what should he think? Had she regretted her confession? Had she sought the aid of Moslem friends to escape from Christian influences?

Mean Munad was perplexed, but his wife was sure that Zeinab had not denied her Lord. She felt sure that she was the victim of some diabolical plot devised by the priest and executed by Moslems at his bidding. But what the plot was she could not guess. Where Zeinab and the children were—who could tell?

In the evening the little band of Christians at Gunahpur united in special prayer and supplication on behalf of Zeinab and the children. Every one felt as if some great calamity had befallen them. There were those who had observed sullen looks and dark scowling faces that day. A friendly Hindu neighbor had warned Mean Munad not to expose himself alone for some days, lest he might be secretly attacked. He knew the temper of the people too well to despise the caution of a disinter-

ested spectator. As the Annual Conference of the missionaries was to be held in a neighboring city during the week following Mean Munad concluded to close the Dispensary for a week, and to take his family with him the day following and visit a friend on the way.

During the next day medicines were prescribed and the word of God preached as usual. The announcement was made as to the intended vacation. In the evening all things were made ready for the visit, to be followed by the Conference meeting in the great city.

## CHAPTER VII.

“You understand, Zeinab, that in accord with the custom of our people, not to say anything as to the law of our holy religion, I am the natural guardian of these children of my brother Abdulla; may the peace of Allah be upon him! Such being the case, and having learned from my dear friend Mullah Sahib that you had fallen under the evil influence of the Christians at Gunahpur, I determined to have you come to my house, where you would not be subjected to temptation and to possible perversion of your faith.”

Thus spake Haji Murad Ali. Zeinab listened to his words with feelings of mingled astonishment and indignation. The deception practised upon her to get her away from Gunahpur and to bring her and her children into what must be equivalent to captivity was nothing unusual among the Moslems, but she had refused to believe any of her friends would venture to deceive her. It now was as clear

to her mind as daylight. Without indicating the slightest fear, or even anxiety as to the prospect before her, she replied by saying in tones calm and clear, "Haji Sahib, I am truly surprised at your duplicity. When I was left a poor widow and sickness was added to my sorrow, when I watched night and day over my children and nursed them back to health, you hardly so much as wrote a line to condole with me, nor did you ever spend a single rupee to buy bread for my children. You and your friends of Gunahpur were not unwilling I should receive substantial help from the Christians, who were ready to provide me with food and medicine in my hour of distress, who gave me the opportunity of earning an honorable living for myself and my children. How you can reconcile such treatment and such duplicity with your own sense of right I will leave you to undertake for yourself."

Haji Murad Ali winced under these reproaches, not so much because he felt any qualms of conscience as for the reason that Zeinab, a woman, had ventured to address

him in this fashion. He, however, suppressed his rising anger and said, "Zeinab, go to the women's apartments, where you will be shown your future quarters. A little reflection will convince you that I have tried to do you good. If you behave yourself as a faithful Moslem woman should it will be well with you. If you do not, you know what will follow."

With this threat ringing in her ears, Zeinab and her wondering and frightened children obeyed the command and retired to the women's apartments. Arriving there, she was shown a small room, in one corner, which could be closed by a lock from the outside. The women regarded her coldly and seemed to be afraid of her touch. They regarded her as an unclean thing—a Christian dog. With one accord they praised the kindness and generosity of the Haji, and expressed wonder at his having been willing to show kindness to one who had so far degraded herself as to fraternize with Christians.

Zeinab sat down on the mattress spread on the floor, which should at once serve for

chairs and bed, and gave way to a flood of tears. Ahmad and Bannu were too much frightened to cry, but both nestled in the lap of the weeping mother. At last Bannu whispered to her mother, "Mamma dear, is our kismet bad again? Can't Jesus make it good?"

The child's words brought Zeinab back to herself again. She told her children what had occurred. She explained that the Moslems were angry because she had worshipped with the Christians, and that they now wanted to oblige her and her children to abandon Christ and turn again to Mohammed. She counselled them to be good children and by kindness to show their uncle that they had not learned anything bad at Gunahpur. Yes, Jesus could make their condition good; He would take care of them. They must all try to please Him while in the home of their uncle. After prayer for her children Zeinab soon fell asleep.

It was late the next day before Zeinab was disturbed. She had not heard the morning call to prayer. When awakened she was obliged to perform the usual ablutions necessary to purify herself according to Moslem

ritual. Haji Murad Ali made his appearance in a robe of spotless white. He told Zeinab that Ahmad must attend the government school near by, and that she and Bannu must undertake such service as the favorite wife should be pleased to command.

Zeinab soon found out that this meant, for her at least, a hard service. The menial work of the house was prescribed for her. She was at the beck and nod of every other member of the harem. Bannu had never learned any lessons of cruel treatment. She soon found how different her lot was to be in this house. For the most trivial reason she was scolded and beaten; she always seemed to be in the way of somebody. There was no Miriam to play with now; no one was there to give her a lesson in her books. She however endeavored to bear it all meekly and to obey her mother's advice. She tried at times to sing her hymns, but no sooner would she begin than some of the Moslem women would begin to mock and scold. When she desired to go out of the house she was hindered and scolded until she would cry.



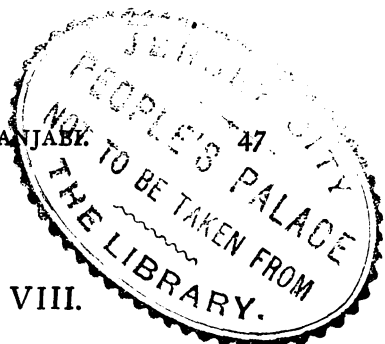


It was the hope of Haji Murad Ali that separation from old associations would wean away Zeinab, and especially her children, from the Christian teaching they had been influenced by. He believed the children would soon forget their studies in the Bible, and that even Zeinab would fail to follow long in the way of Christ. His plans were well laid, and when Zeinab heard nothing from Mean Murad or his wife she could not understand it; she did not know of the total ignorance of her Christian friends at Gunahpur in regard to her present abode. It was natural for her to feel that perhaps after all the Christians were apt to forget their converts. "Out of sight, out of mind" was a proverb she had learned in childhood, and now it looked as if this was to be verified. Weeks and months passed, and she toiled, but not one word from Gunahpur. Whenever she made mention of it her Moslem friends and companions would say, "Yes; so long as the Christians have a hope of spoiling your religion they are attentive, but when the hope is gone they no longer give themselves any trouble." Yet Zeinab remained steadfast in

her faith. Even when compelled to take part with the other women in public prayer Zeinab prayed to Jesus in secret. Bannu did not forget her hymns and verses, but would repeat them to her mother and brother from memory. Trial and persecution seemed rather to strengthen their faith than to weaken it.

But the resources of Islam were by no means exhausted. One day Ahmad went to school as usual, while Zeinab and Bannu were trying to fulfil their daily tasks as well as they could. The favorite wife, however, seemed harder to please than ever before. Bannu especially seemed the object of her cruelty and caprice, and finally she was seized and taken away for punishment. Zeinab could only pray and weep. Every effort to aid her child only added to her cruel treatment. Oft-times she had been confined in a dark room after being unmercifully beaten, but to-day she did not return. Evening came and Ahmad too failed to appear. Zeinab retired to her room alone to spend a sleepless night, weeping, like Rachel, for her children, because they were not.

ZEINAB, THE PANJABI.



## CHAPTER VIII.

FOR several days previous to the sudden disappearance of Ahmad and Bannu a dervish had made his appearance in Lahaur. He was of a dark complexion, with piercing black eyes and long curly locks which fell upon his shoulders. Five times a day he mounted the rostrum of the Iama Masjid and led the Moslems in the appointed prayers. After prayers he would address the assembled multitude of worshippers upon some topic suited to arouse their religious zeal. His special object seemed to be to oppose the efforts of the Christian missionaries. He ridiculed the doctrine and practice of the Christians; he daily called upon the devoted followers of Mohammed to shut their doors against the proselyting female missionaries, who were going from house to house perverting the faith of simple-minded housewives and thoughtless children. On one occasion he publicly alluded to Zeinab and her children as examples of the evil influence of

“these unscrupulous eaters of swine’s flesh.” Haji Murad Ali did not escape the sharp censure of this fiery zealot of Islam. He was charged with harboring in his harem a family of infidels who would drag him down to destruction. When explanation was made the dervish would fiercely accuse Haji Murad of lukewarmness, and the taunt was added more than once that he was half a Christian himself. This was more than Haji Murad Ali could endure. He called upon the dervish and inquired what he should do in order to rectify his conduct and make himself a consistent Moslem. The dervish counselled a stern policy of repression. “As for the children,” said the dervish, “separate them from the mother and they will soon follow their religious teachers, while she will be more easily influenced to retrace her steps.”

At first Haji Murad Ali did not relish what seemed to him to be a cruel suggestion. But when one and another of his neighbors began to expostulate with him he felt he must do something to satisfy the popular demand. One day the dervish called upon him, and after

many expressions of sympathy proposed a plan to relieve him from his present embarrassment. After listening patiently to the details of the plan, Murad Ali, though he yearned for relief from popular criticism, yet hesitated to adopt the scheme proposed. Just then two men came in and in excited tones began to upbraid him for harboring a nest of perverts to Christianity. They both testified to the fact that their little daughters had learned portions of a Christian hymn from the little girl Bannu, and that they even tried to sing to the praise of Hazrat Isa (the Lord Jesus). "Why," said they both, "if this goes on we shall all be obliged to become Christians!"

This episode determined Murad Ali, and he consented that the dervish should take the children to a distant city where they might be brought up as true Moslems. It was arranged that when they should be taken away there should be a mock search and a show of sorrow for the lost children, in order to deceive Zeinab as to their fate.

One day when Bannu was locked up, after being beaten for some whim of the favorite

wife, a man appeared at the door, who spoke quietly and in sympathetic tones to her, saying he had come from Gunahpur to take her and her brother back to their school and to Mr. and Mrs. Munad. He further said that Ahmad must go along with her now and that later their mother would join them. Falling into this snare, Bannu consented to exchange her prison for freedom—her persecutors for her friends. Following the guide they soon found Ahmad, who was easily persuaded to accompany them beyond the walls of the city. Entering a closed carriage they were soon driven to the railway station and shortly afterwards they were moving rapidly along the iron rails. The guide removed the wraps around his head and chest and sat down. Ahmad recognized the dervish, and his heart, young as it was, sunk within him. He felt sure that some dark plot was behind this railway journey. However, concealing his fears, he awaited further developments. He observed that they were not going to Gunahpur, but where he knew not.

As hour after hour passed away the chil-

dren became restless and uneasy. Bannu was buoyed up for a while with the thought of returning to kind friends and teachers. But when Ahmad had opportunity to whisper his fears to her she became doubly anxious, because she was going away from her dear mother, and where, neither she nor Ahmad could guess. Once or twice, as the porters called the names of the stations, they thought they had heard the name before, but both were perplexed, and as night came on they could not refrain from tears. They did not forget to say the evening prayer and to ask God to bless their mother. By and by tired nature succumbed and they slept.

## CHAPTER IX.

How long they had slept the children knew not. They were awakened by a sudden shock and a crash. Immediately there arose on all sides of them heart-rending shrieks and piteous cries for help. Ahmad attempted to rise and go to Bannu, who was calling him, but he found himself shut in by the broken timbers of the train which had been so suddenly wrecked. He called to Bannu, who was more fortunate, though quite bewildered by fright. In her anxiety for Ahmad she called to the dervish, beseeching him to come to their aid. All was confusion around them.

A few minutes sufficed for such of the railway servants and passengers as had escaped from the wreck to secure lights and to begin the sad work of rescue. One by one the living who were wounded, or imprisoned amid the fragments of broken carriages, were brought out and placed where they might receive such care as they required. Among these were



Ahmad and Bannu, who had escaped serious injury.

Many of the passengers had been killed. A careless switchman had failed to close the switch, and the train whirling along at full speed had been hurled into the ditch at the side of the track. The dead were removed from the wreck and tenderly laid upon the ground to await the action of the coroner. Hours passed after the sun had risen upon the scene of horror, and the sad duty was not yet performed. Ahmad and Bannu had not seen the dervish, nor had he responded to their call for help. As the dead were borne away Ahmad recognized among them his lifeless body. Though the thought of freedom came to him with a feeling akin to joy, yet the sense of loneliness which immediately suggested itself caused him to cry bitterly. Bannu clasped his hands and cried in the agony of mingled fear and loneliness.

It was some hours later when the English official representative of the railway, accompanied by the magistrate, the civil surgeon and the superintendent of police, arrived by special

train. Having inspected the scene of the disaster and gathered such information as was desired, the officials made inquiry as to the survivors. Coming to Ahmad and Bannu they made particular inquiry as to where they came from and whither they were going. Ahmad related their history, from the time they had left Gunahpur until the day they left Lahaur, with the dervish, expecting to return to the school under the care of Mean Munad.

The magistrate was deeply interested in the story of the children. He was quick to discern that they had been the victims of a conspiracy. What or why was not so apparent. The dervish was dead, and would be reported to the proper officer at Lahaur; but what to do with the homeless children was not so clear. The children, when asked where they wished to be sent, seemed to desire both to go to their mother in Lahaur and to the kind friends in Gunahpur. After deliberation it was finally decided to notify both Mr. Munad and Zeinab as to the circumstances under which the children had been found. In the meanwhile they were taken under the care of

the magistrate until they might be committed to the care of guardians or friends.

The special train returned to Fazilghar. Ahmad and Bannu were on board. The magistrate's wife was at the station to meet her husband. She was quickly interested in the story of the children and immediately undertook to make them happy while the search for their friends went on. She was not long in learning their history from the lips of Bannu. When she learned that they were Christians she immediately discerned the motive for the twofold kidnapping. She made up her mind that they must not be placed at the mercy of their enemies. She told her thoughts to her husband, who placed a guard of police to prevent any attempt to remove the children until the matter should be fully investigated.

Ahmad and Bannu slept in comfortable beds and were undisturbed save by the terrible remembrances of the previous day and night.

Colonel Brown, the magistrate of Fazilghar, was deeply interested in his wards, so strangely delivered from the hands of their enemies. Af-

ter consultation with the superintendent of police it was determined to summon to the court both Zeinab and Mean Munad, and thus discover, if possible, the persons who had been guilty of the crime of kidnapping the children. The telegraph was soon busily employed in carrying the necessary orders to the police departments at the capital and at Gunahpur.

## CHAPTER X.

WHEN Zeinab met Haji Murad Ali in the early morning he was just returning from prayers. He had a troubled look upon his face and was unable to gaze into her eyes while speaking. With sorrowing tones Zeinab besought him to bring back to her the children Allah had given her; with woman's instinct she had coupled him with the absence of the children. She therefore reproached him and plead with him by turns.

On his part Haji Murad Ali was not unmoved. Though it was part of the programme to make a mock show of interest in the search for the children, just now he almost wished they might be found. Unconsciously he had been drawn to his sprightly little niece, and had learned to love her much for her goodness and simplicity. He promised Zeinab, in tones more kindly and sympathetic than usual, that he would institute a search. To shield himself he added that he would find them if pos-

sible. The household was soon busy in their effort *not* to find the lost children. No one had seen them depart. The dervish had done his work well.

It was late in the afternoon of the next day when a policeman in uniform appeared at the door asking for Murad Ali. He came with the news that the train carrying his wards had been wrecked, and that, while the children had escaped, the dervish had been instantly killed. Murad Ali was dismayed when thus suddenly confronted by what at once appeared to be the threatenings of human and Divine justice. Nor were his new-born fears relieved when shown a warrant requiring the immediate presence of Zeinab in Fazilghar to identify her children and to tell what she knew as to their disappearance from her side. Showing the officer a seat on a divan in the men's parlor, and ordering for him a pipe and sherbet, he hurried into the women's department to communicate the unwelcome news—unwelcome to all but Zeinab. A hurried consultation with the wives resulted in their all hurrying to Zeinab with the news that Ahmad and Bannu

had been found, and that their abductor had been killed in a railway accident, from which they had miraculously escaped. All the women appeared to be overjoyed at the good news, and the favorite wife simulated joy so successfully that even Zeinab felt grateful for her sympathy, apparently so cordial. Zeinab must go to Fazilghar in obedience to the magistrate's order. The Haji felt that he must accompany her, in order if possible to prevent her exposing his conduct in connection with the abduction of herself and the children from Gu-nahpur.

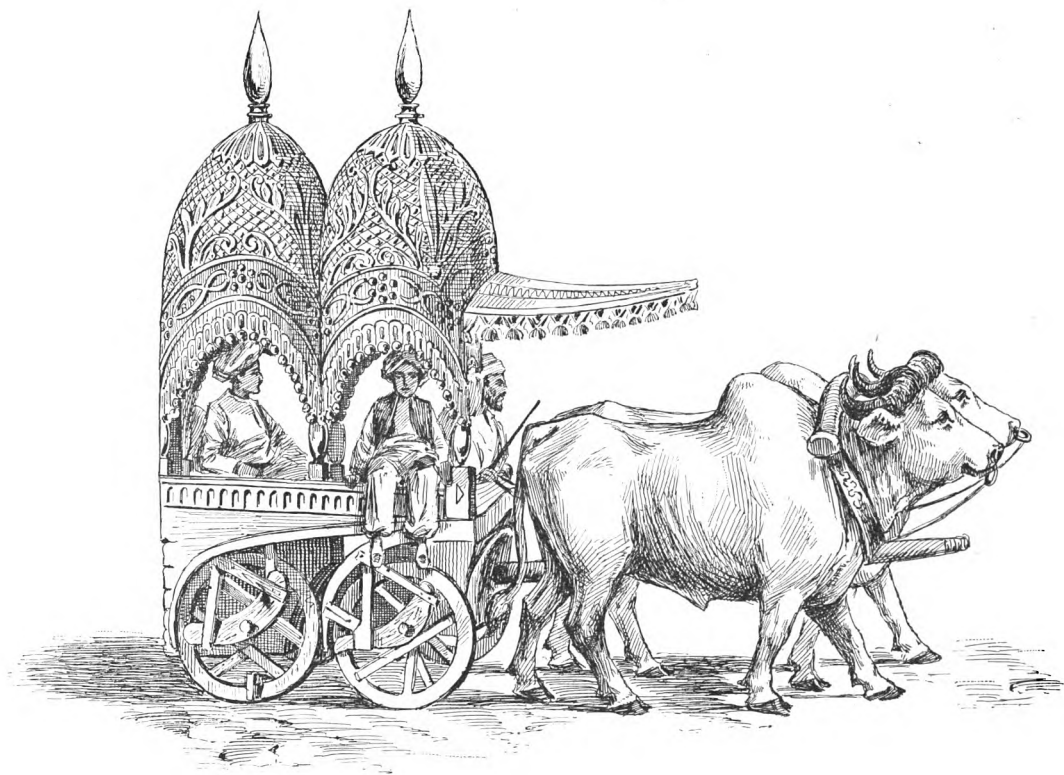
Zeinab was so overwhelmed with joy at being thus suddenly placed in communication with her lost children, and so grateful to her Lord who had so signally answered her prayers, that she quite forgot her resentment towards her persecutors. She cordially accepted the offer of Haji Murad to accompany her to Fazilghar. The whole world seemed to have made peace with her. The orange and mango trees looked greener, the roses and jasmynes seemed more beautiful and the birds sang more sweetly than ever before. Her heart

was filled with a devout sense of the goodness of God.

The preparation for the journey was made as speedily as possible, the police officer patiently waiting in the comfortable parlor. Presently a covered carriage, drawn by a yoke of Gujarati oxen, was brought to the door. Zeinab, wearing the conventional veil of the Moslem women, entered the carriage accompanied by Haji Murad Ali, who sat beside the driver. On entering the railway carriage the police superintendent insisted upon two officers going with Zeinab, to insure the fulfillment of the order received from the magistrate of Fazilghar. A bountiful supply of sweetmeats and tobacco made the officers the friends of the Haji. Opportunity was found on the way when Zeinab was importuned not to expose her relatives to the magistrate and so bring upon them disgrace, and even possible loss by fines or imprisonment.

Zeinab felt strongly tempted to retaliate, and so avenge herself of the wrongs she had borne at the hands of Murad Ali and his family. She could not, however, fail to see that





her relative had been under strong pressure, and that his course had been characteristic of that false system of religion which she herself had only just now been led to abandon. Her heart yearned for her brother-in-law, and she felt that she had now an opportunity to address him upon the subject which lay so near to her own heart. Looking into the eyes of her relative, and reading there the deep solicitude which now marked his countenance, she lifted her heart to God in prayer for wisdom. She hardly knew what to say, but recalling the scene at the prayer-meeting in Gu-nahpur, when she had made confession of her faith, she received courage to speak.

“Haji Murad,” said she, “you know the zeal of your brother Abdulla, of blessed memory. He was all his life a humble and faithful follower of Islam. You know that I was his faithful and obedient spouse. Five times a day we prayed to Allah; thirty days every year, in the month of Ramazan, we fasted, never allowing morsel of food or drop of water to pass our lips from earliest dawn until sundown. We gave one fortieth of our poor earnings to the

cause of religion and charity. Only our poverty prevented our performing the pilgrimage to Mecca and to the tomb of the prophet. We were devout Moslems and yet we never found peace with God. There was something wanting which we could not find, so that when Abdulla passed from this earthly scene he cried to Allah for mercy and longed for peace. When I would urge him to submit himself to the will of Allah he would say that he did submit himself to the Almighty, but that he longed for some assurance that his sins had been pardoned. 'Allah is just,' he would say, 'and if He is just, and if His law is true, then I must suffer the penalty of my sins.' He seemed to think that Allah could not justly pardon sin. The Mullah would come and expound to him the Holy Koran, but he would still cry out, 'Oh, my sins! How shall I escape condemnation!' And so he went on until the day before he died, when the Christian missionary came to see him and to bring him some medicine from the Dispensary. He spoke to him kindly but earnestly, and told him something which filled his mind with joy and peace. He

was reconciled with his lot, and from that hour waited patiently for the approach of the dread messenger. I did not then understand what it was that brought to him this peace. I have since learned to know it by a personal experience, and have heard what the missionary said to my dying husband which resulted in giving him peace in his last hours on earth. Bear with me, Haji Murad, when I tell you that I have learned how the Almighty can be merciful to us who are guilty of sin and deserving of His wrath and indignation. He has sent into the world His only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave his life a ransom for sinners and through whose death atonement has been made. It was this good news, this Gospel of Peace, that sustained your brother in a dying hour. It is this same gospel which has supported me and my children. For this we have been persecuted. For this you have aided in this persecution. I know your motive; I appreciate your thought to save us from destruction, as you have been taught, but I want you to ask yourself the question whether a religion characterized by lying and de-

ceit, and marred by unfeeling cruelty to a widow and her orphan children, can be acceptable to the pure and holy and merciful Allah? As for your request, I can only say I forgive you, and that I have no desire to avenge myself upon you or upon any of my relatives and neighbors; but I cannot descend to any act or word that is false and wicked to accomplish any end whatever. I do not know what is wanted of me in Fazilghar, but I will promise to do all I can to shield you from trouble, should any trouble arise."

Haji Murad was spellbound while Zeinab impetuously gave utterance to these words. He felt that Zeinab spoke with an earnestness of conviction, a seriousness of purpose, that he had never seen in woman before. In spite of himself he found himself saying, "Whence did this woman receive this wisdom and power?" He finally spoke in a subdued tone and said, "Zeinab, I thank you for your generous promise. You surprise me by your wisdom and earnestness. I still feel that you are the victim of some strange fanaticism, but I cannot but respect your sincerity. I have been greatly

influenced by the affection, simplicity and patience of Bannu. Now it seems to me I should make further inquiry in regard to the teaching of the Holy Injil (Gospel).”

The call of the railway guard and the approach of the two police officers warned Haji Murad Ali and Zeinab that they had arrived at their destination.

As soon as Zeinab alighted from the railway carriage she was greeted by Bannu and Ahmad and their kind guardians, Mr. and Mrs. Brown. All eyes were suffused with tears of joy at the meeting. Haji Murad Ali alone was filled with misgiving when he met the stern gaze and cold greeting of the magistrate.

## CHAPTER XI.

ON the day succeeding the railway accident Mean Munad was surprised by the receipt of a telegram from Mr. Brown, the magistrate of Fazilghar, relating briefly the facts as to the discovery of Ahmad and Bannu and requesting his presence at the court the next day. Mrs. Munad and Miriam were overjoyed to learn that their little friends had been heard from at last. "Oh, papa, cannot I go along with you?" said Miriam, in her anxiety to meet her playmate. "No, my daughter," said Mr. Munad; "I hope we can bring them back again and have them with us all the time." Thus comforted, Miriam was content to await her father's return.

Mean Munad made preparation for an absence of two or three days. He visited his Dispensary as usual and prescribed medicine, giving directions which should cover the period when he should be absent from home. In due time he received a large envelope, bearing

the official seal of the local magistrate, brought to him by a mounted policeman. It contained a formal summons to appear before the magistrate of Fazilghar to testify in regard to the children, Ahmad and Bannu, who seemed to have been kidnapped by a Moslem dervish killed in a railway accident, and other persons not yet fully known. It was the official accompaniment of the private telegram before received.

On going out to return the receipt of summons to the mounted messenger Mean Munad saw, among many visitors who awaited their turn to be treated, the village priest and his friend Haji Khairuddin. Leaning forward with great demonstrations of respect they sought for a private interview with the missionary. Such conduct on their part was so unusual as to awaken surprise, but Mean Munad received them with quiet dignity and arranged to meet with them privately after he had completed his duty respecting the suffering inmates in the waiting-room of the Dispensary.

When every case had been examined and medicine prescribed, Mean Munad called in



the priest and Haji Khairuddin. They were shown seats, the doors were closed, and after the usual greetings Mean Munad inquired the nature of their business with him. Looking at each other for a moment the priest began to speak :

“ We have heard,” said he, “ that Zeinab, who with her children left our town so unaccountably, has been heard from, and that the magistrate of Fazilghar has summoned you to appear in his court to testify concerning their alleged abduction from Gunahpur. We have come to remind you of the many kindnesses we have shown towards Zeinab, and how that in her distress my friend Haji Khairuddin helped her in a substantial manner. We are anxious that you may not allow any one to reflect upon us in this matter. You are a great man, and our ruler, and a word from you is sufficient to save or destroy us.”

Mr. Munad could with difficulty suppress the angry words which rose to his lips. There sat the two men who above all others had been active in removing Zeinab and her children from their home. These were the men who

were at the bottom of the conspiracy, and yet they dared to simulate innocence and to boast of their charity toward the widow and orphans whom they had so cruelly wronged. However, overcoming the impulse to pour upon their heads the well-filled vials of indignation, and lifting up his heart in silent prayer for help Mean Munad said,

“Mullah Sahib,” for thus he always addressed the Moslem priest, showing formal respect to his dignity, “you surprise me beyond measure by the declaration which you have made. I know that you were kind to the widow of Abdulla and her children so long as they remained steadfast in their adherence to Islam. I know that Haji Khairuddin was disposed to aid her, and I have been told that he even meditated a proposal of marriage in order better to care for her and her children. But I also know that when Zeinab abjured Islam and professed her faith in the gospel of Jesus there were none so active in the endeavor to bring her back, by force if necessary, to her allegiance to the religion of Mohammed as you were. I have positive proof of the fact

that both of you gentlemen were at the railway station on the morning when Zeinab left Gunahpur, and that Haji Khairuddin's brother and wife accompanied them on their journey hence. This much is certain: that you were the leaders in the abduction from Gunahpur, if there was any abduction whatever."

As Mean Munad spoke thus plainly, and revealed to his hearers his knowledge of their hypocrisy and crime, they at first moved nervously in their seats, then grew pale, and at the close they both prostrated themselves at the feet of the missionary and clutching his feet began to beg for mercy. "You have us in your power," they cried; "have compassion upon our wives and children! Do not hand us over to the English magistrate! We should be forever disgraced." Mean Munad could not help indulging a feeling of contempt for these base conspirators, now so abject in their fear of punishment. Nor could he conceal from himself a sense of triumph as he beheld these proud Mussulmans, who but yesterday turned their heads away from him and spat on the ground to show how they loathed

his very presence, now cringing and trembling before him. To their prayer he returned the following answer: "Rise up like men and look me in the face, while I tell you what I shall do. You have treated Zeinab and her fatherless children most shamefully. I do not know the extent of that cruelty as yet. You have added to it by cruel and insulting treatment of myself and her Christian friends. You would not have hesitated to drive me from the town if you had dared. Now that your sin has found you out you are earnest in your plea that somehow I should shield you. Now you know that we have no desire to harm any of you. We are Christians, and I trust we have some of the gentleness of our Master. I do not know what I shall be able to do when I arrive in Fazilghar, but I shall insist upon one condition before promising to intercede in your behalf." Mean Munad looked with a fixed gaze upon the downcast faces of the Moslems. The priest asked him to mention his condition. He said, "I insist that you restore the furniture taken from Zeinab's house and that you arrange everything there for her comfort,

and that you give me your solemn pledge, in the presence of two witnesses, that you will not again molest this widow or her children.”

The two conspirators accepted the conditions. Two persons were called as witnesses, and before them the pledge of good conduct was made. Then they took leave of the missionary, after protesting their good will, and set to work to prepare for Zeinab's return.

## CHAPTER XII.

BEFORE Mean Munad entered the train which was to carry him to Fazilghar he was met at the station by a servant sent by Haji Khairuddin to say that the house was ready to receive Zeinab on her return. The missionary was now rejoicing in the faithfulness of God in having guarded his handmaid and her little ones during the long period of their separation from Christian influence. He reproached himself for the suspicion, which had more than once entered his mind, that Zeinab had apostatized from the Christian faith. He recalled the faithfulness of God in his dealings with him, and rejoiced in this new evidence of His goodness to His people. Many had been the trials through which he had passed and many were his anxieties for the future, but just now he felt strong and confident in the assurance of the final success of his work.

Thus ran his thoughts late into the night. Early in the morning the train reached Fazil-

ghar and soon Mean Munad found himself under the hospitable roof of Mr. and Mrs. Brown. A little later Zeinab, Ahmad and Bannu were ushered in to to greet their friend and pastor. The story of their experiences was again told for his information. They all united in heart-felt praise to God for his goodness.

After breakfast Zeinab introduced to Mean Munad her brother-in-law, Haji Murad Ali, who wore a look of anxiety. He was ill at ease, and spoke in a hesitating way that was quite unusual. Zeinab told her pastor that she was anxious that her relatives should not be made to suffer for their mistaken zeal in her behalf. She said that she entirely forgave their fault and hoped they might be forgiven by the powers that be. Mean Munad said he would do what he could to further Zeinab's charitable intent.

Mean Munad now felt that he should use his opportunity to address Haji Murad Ali upon the subject of religion. He told him of his visit to his brother when upon his death-bed, and of the joy which Abdulla expressed to him when he set before him Jesus Christ

as the Advocate of lost sinners. “ ‘ You have been taught to believe in the intercession of Mohammed,’ said I, ‘ but you have also been told that he will intercede on the judgment day for the reason that he, with all the prophets, is now numbered with the dead. You surely cannot find satisfaction in a hope like that; you want pardon now. If so, you want a living advocate who can intercede for you now. If you die unforgiven you will rise in the Resurrection unforgiven, and if you are unforgiven then all the prophets in heaven cannot avail to save you. “ Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.” God has provided a living Intercessor in Jesus Christ, who, having died on the cross to make atonement for our sins, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, there to intercede for sinners. Call therefore upon Allah in the name of Jesus, and you will receive pardon and peace.’ As I spoke your brother seemed to drink in every word I said, like a thirsting hart drinking at the water-brook. He closed his eyes saying, as he feebly pressed my hand, ‘ It is enough. This is what my soul has longed



for.' I saw his lips moving as if in prayer. A smile seemed to spread over his countenance. I left him, but when next I came to see him his spirit had fled. I thought I still could trace the smile of yesterday. This, my friend, is the gospel which Zeinab and her children believe. This is the way of life which we present to you."

Haji Murad Ali asked many questions, to all of which the missionary gave a frank reply. Rising he thanked him, and promised to give the matter his very serious attention.

Mean Munad, after consultation with Zeinab, went to see Mr. Brown at his office. He set before him all the circumstances connected with the conversion and abduction of Zeinab and her family. He pointed out to the magistrate how his Moslem neighbors regarded the apostasy of any of their people to Christianity. He then expressed his own anxiety lest any prosecution of those who had persecuted Zeinab might seem like persecution or revenge, and so hinder his work among the people. The magistrate set forth the gravity of the offence and the severity of its legal

punishment, but explained that if Zeinab did not wish to prosecute the matter could be allowed to drop. The fact that the chief instigators to the abduction had pledged their future good behavior, and were prepared to make restitution for all losses sustained, led to the decision that no further action be taken.

It was with a joyful heart that Haji Murad Ali took leave of Zeinab and her children, promising to send all her goods to Gunahpur at an early date. As he left Mean Munad presented him with a copy of the Bible, asking him to read it through carefully and to write him freely upon the subject of their conversation. Shortly after, the missionary, accompanied by Zeinab, Ahmad and Bannu, took leave of Mr. and Mrs. Brown and started upon the journey home. He rejoiced with the Good Shepherd who had found his lost sheep.

When the train rolled into the station at Gunahpur, bringing back Zeinab and her children, the platform was crowded with a multitude of all classes, Christians, Hindus and Moslems. Mrs. Munad and Miriam soon found Zeinab and Bannu. Mean Munad was

surrounded by many friends. Among the most demonstrative were Haji Khairuddin and the old Mullah. All felt that the missionary had shown great magnanimity in using his influence to avert the prosecution of their townsmen. Few there were who did not now condemn the bigotry of the persecutors, and many who had no love for the Christian religion nevertheless deprecated the cruelty practised upon a helpless widow and her orphan children. The spirit of forbearance and forgiveness which was shown by the Christians called special attention to the doctrine preached in the Dispensary Chapel. Much was now said of the kindness and self-denial of the missionaries. The result was the demonstration at the return of Mean Munad and his parishioners from Fazilghar.

Greetings and congratulations having been made, Zeinab and children, Mr. and Mrs. Munad with Miriam, Haji Khairuddin and the old Mullah entered their carriages and drove to Zeinab's house. There they found everything arranged in order. A bountiful repast had been supplied by Haji Khairuddin and

laid upon the cloth spread upon the floor under the direction of Mrs. Munad. There the Christians sat down and refreshed themselves after their long journey. When taking their leave Mean Munad shook hands with the old Mullah and Haji Khairuddin, and expressed the hope that they might always be friends.

Before separating, the Christians united in a service of thanksgiving and praise for the wonderful way in which they had been brought together that night. Mean Munad requested Zeinab to take up her usual round of duty at the Dispensary, and that Ahmad and Bannu should go to school as before. Miriam rejoiced in the prospect of having Bannu with her at school and at play. All the guests at Zeinab's home took their leave, and with feelings of joy and thankfulness they returned to their homes.

The next day found the missionaries as usual at the Dispensary, ministering to the sick and preaching the gospel. Zeinab was at her post as before her abduction. Many were the inquiries of friends and neighbors as to the cause of her having accepted of the

Christian faith. Many were the opportunities she had of telling "the story of Jesus," the Son of God and the Saviour of sinners.

It was perhaps three months after the occurrence of the events narrated above when Zeinab was surprised to receive a visit from her brother-in-law, Haji Murad Ali. His face was bright and his manner cordial. Zeinab received him kindly, and after asking for information as to his household she inquired the purpose of his visit, so unexpected. Haji Murad then told her of the light that had entered his soul from the reading of the Holy Injil and how he now was trusting for his soul's salvation to the merits of the Lord Jesus, whom he recognized as the Son of God and the only Mediator between God and sinful men. He had come to Gunahpur to make profession of his new-found faith.

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