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HAPPY MOHAMMEDAN.

"Polygamy! Yes, I know that is the first thing said when I speak of Islamism," said Mr. Alexander Russell Webb, who has come to this country to make us all good Mohammedans.

"But a plurality of wives is by no means a necessary part of the teachings of the prophet. Indeed, out of the 1000 Mohammedans of whom I asked the question: 'How many wives have you?' the answer was invariably, 'Why, only one. I could not love more than one woman. Besides, I am afraid they would quarrel.'"

"I think I met at least 5000 Mohammedans in India who had only one wife. A passage in the Koran says: 'If you can love equally more than one wife, and treat each one with equal justice, then you may have more than one. If you have any doubts as to whether you can love them equally, then marry but one.'"

"The strictly conscientious follower of the prophet finds this passage considerable of a stumbling-block, since very few men can love equally two women. The Koran limits the number of wives to four, and more than that is directly against the teachings of Mohammed. A harem is in reality forbidden.

"'A woman has no soul,' has been said of Mohammedan teaching. This is entirely false. On the contrary, Mohammed considered a woman man's superior, spiritually. She must never be forced to be a bread-winner. Man must toil to care for her. She is meant to be his champion, to make his home comfortable, to be the mother of his children, and to perform those duties for which she is physically fitted.

"A homeless Mohammedan woman is an impossibility. I never saw a woman begging in the street during all my residence among them; nor did I see one earning her own living in a public way."

"How, then, do they manage?"

"They are all married."

"But the left-overs, such as the ugly, ill-formed or crippled?"

"Oh, if they are very undesirable, indeed, they are taken into some home to help with the household duties—that is, if they have no male relative to care for them. Family ties and obligations are very strong. It would be a deep disgrace for a man to allow his brother's wife or daughter to be without a

home. He must care for them always, unless some one else offers to share the burden with him.

"Suppose I had my deceased brother's family on my hands, very likely some wealthy Mohammedan would come to me and say, 'I wish to help you. Let your brother's wife or daughter'—or perhaps both—'come to me as wives.'"

"These women would have in the eyes of the law all the financial advantages of his wives, while in other ways they might simply be wives in name, as he might prefer to remain faithful to the one wife whom he loved. Such cases are of frequent occurrence. These women would be inmates of his home, with rights of dower, and would be always well cared for. But a American could not do that without scandal."

"What do you mean by 'rights of dower'?"

"Before the Mohammedan woman is married her prospective husband must settle upon her a dowry, which is hers unconditionally. If he cannot give a dowry to his wife, then he cannot be married. He must show that he is able to support a wife. She owns her property in her own right and it can never be touched for her husband's debts.

"I tell you a Mohammedan woman is much better protected in money matters than an American woman. She does not have to submit to the brutal state of affairs which obtains in so many families, where a wife never has one penny she can call her own.

"The marriage is never a religious ceremony, but is simply a civil contract, and can be set aside like any other civil contract. Such a thing as a divorce suit, with its attendant scandal, is never known there.

"If a wife is a scold or a tyrant, or otherwise undesirable, she is promptly returned to her parents or male relative. This is apt to make a woman behave herself, and not attempt the lengths to which she sometimes goes in this country, where she thinks, 'Well, now, I've got him, and I can do as I please; he will not want to submit to this scandal of a divorce.'"

"I know plenty of men who would give their heads to be rid of their wives, who know that they are flagrantly unfaithful to them, and who yet suffer in silence rather than incur the newspaper gossip and scandal which would be sure to come with a

divorce. Then, too, why should people live out and do live, when separation means peace? I much prefer the Moslem way of settling these things."

"But how about the women. Can they get rid of an undesirable husband as easily?"

"Certainly. They have only to go to their nearest male relative and lay the case before him. He goes to the husband and says, 'My niece is unhappy in your house, and does not wish to stay.' 'Very well,' says the husband, 'I do not wish to keep her, then. Take her home whenever you please.' And so the affair is ended quietly and decently. The woman, however, keeps the dowry which has been given her, and will probably be more fortunate in her next married experience.

"This does not occur very often, because such women are not so sentimental, and have not such exaggerated ideas of love as they have here. They find occupation for their minds in reading, music, embroidery, the care of their children and homes.

"A Mohammedan was never known to strike his wife. His conduct toward her is generally respectful, kind and considerate, and he never comes home drunk. A Mohammedan knows not the taste of whiskey, wine or beer, except where he has been converted by a Christian missionary and become contaminated by his association with the English.

HE NEVER TELLS SHADY STORIES.

"The marriage relation is to him so nothing sacred, and his wife's name must never be mentioned among other men. He can never regard a man's amours as in any case a subject for laughter, and such a thing as a "shady" story told among men is unknown.

"When he wishes to marry, his friends go to the friends of the woman and arrange all the preliminaries. He is then permitted to see his intended bride once before the ceremony. If the meeting is not mutually satisfactory, either the man or the woman may withdraw from the contract."

"Do you believe it possible for progressive, modern, American women to become good Mohammedans?"

"Certainly. You must remember that the idea of isolation in harems does not really belong to the teachings of the Koran. It is a part of the Purdah system and is an Indian custom.

"Mohammed enjoined upon women