

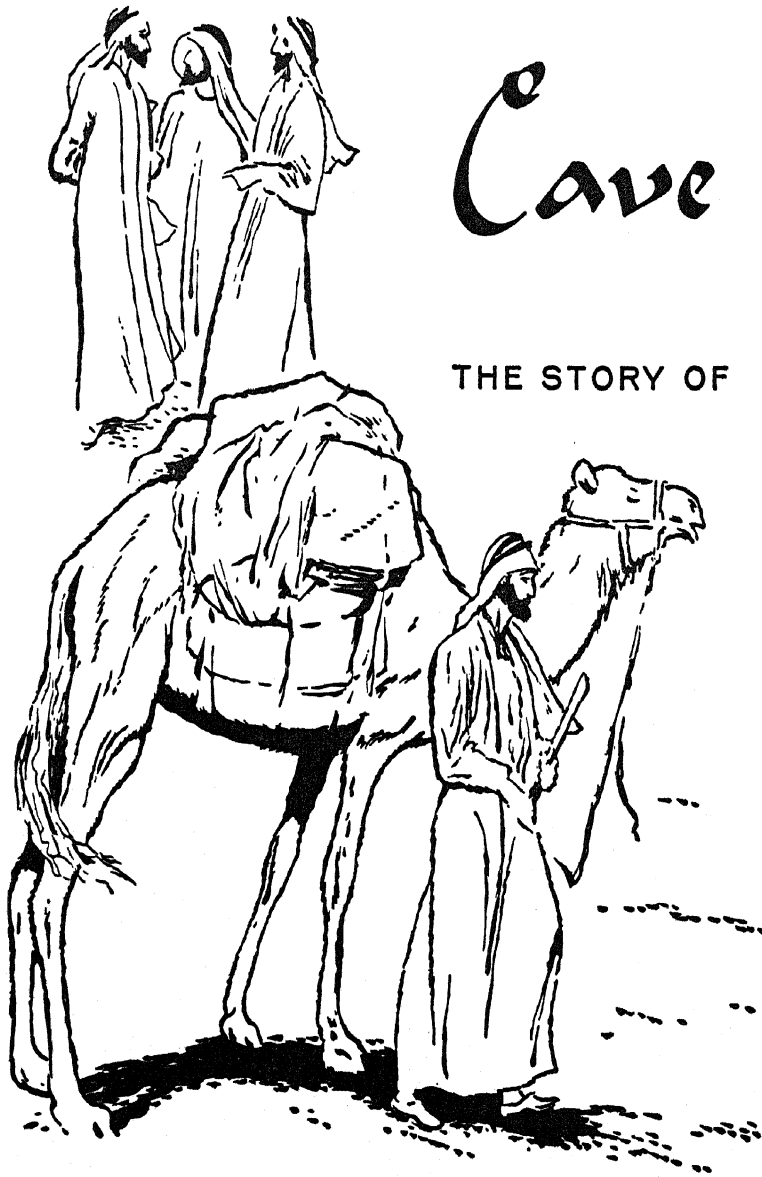
Cave of Riches

by ALAN HONOUR

Cave of Riches

THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

THE STORY OF



WHITTLESEY HOUSE
McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.
New York Toronto London

illustrated by P. A. HUTCHISON

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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 56-10318

Published by Whittlesey House

A division of the McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

For Eileen Baker



A Note from the Author

IT is always difficult to reconstruct a story exactly as it happened. Whereas the events and characters in this story are real, the words are sometimes those which I have given to the characters, for we do not know the exact conversations that took place; I have drawn primarily upon my years of experience in and around the area where this incredible discovery was made and my association with the peoples therein.

To one who knows the desert places, the silence is awesome. The heat is dreadful, and the desolation abominable. But, paradoxically, such places offer ideal conditions for one of the greatest of life's pleasures—meditation.

Anyone who has spent time in deserts can understand how and why it is that the prophets of the Old and New Testaments went out into the wil-

dernesses to draw close to God and to seek the answers to their quests. The presence of eternal truths is ever apparent in the midst of desolate wastes, and loneliness becomes a source of strength.

I had many Bedouin friends. One boy, Selib, whose tribe wanders not far from the territory of the Ta-amirah, could easily have been Muhammad Dib. His sheik could easily have been Sheik Abdullah. I owe hearty thanks to these Bedouin friends, and to the Jewish friends who were always willing and eager to tell me things about ancient Jerusalem as well as the ideas of modern Israel. To both groups I owe a debt for all they taught me.

I must offer thanks, too, to the authors of two books which have provided me with many hours of fascinating reading. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, by Millar Burrows (published by The Viking Press), and *The Scrolls from the Dead Sea*, by Edmund Wilson (published by The Oxford University Press). Special thanks are due Dr. Burrows and his publisher for their gracious permission to quote four excerpts herein (pages 135, 137, 141, 142) from Dr. Burrows' translations of the scrolls.

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Loses a Goat

THE pitiless sun shone from a cloudless blue sky. Glaring light struck the brown rocks scattered over the yellow-white landscape and sent up shimmering waves of heat. Every object on the desert floor appeared to sway and dance in a haze.

Muhammad Dib was dizzy from watching his small herd of black goats, and he sat down to rest. A length of cloth covered his head and shoulders, and he pulled a corner of it over his face and tucked it into the two braided bands that held the cloth in place on his head. Then he rested his head on his knees and pulled the long sleeves of his loose robe over his head for more protection from the blistering sun and the hot dry wind that blew sand and dust into his face.

Dib—which means Wolf in Arabic—was tend-

ing his goats in the same way boys have been doing for thousands of years in the Holy Land, which, in that year of 1947, was known as Palestine. That part of the world is sometimes called "the land of three Sundays and four tomorrows," because it is a revered and holy place for three of the world's major religions. The Moslems have their Sabbath on Friday, the Jews on Saturday, and the Christians on Sunday.

Muhammad Dib, on that hot day, might have stepped from the pages of the Bible. His style of dress had been the same for centuries. His goats were the same kind, and the merciless sun must have glared down in the same fashion on thousands of goatherds like him for thousands of years.

Dib's people were nomads, Bedouins, who lived in the desert regions, and goats were the chief source of their livelihood. The tribes wandered constantly in search of scrubgrass to feed the black animals.

The milk from the goats they made into cheese, and the cheese which they did not eat was sold or traded in the towns for tea, coffee, sugar, or other needs of the tribe. They wove hair from the goats into cloth for blankets and tents, and they used the skins on the sand floor of the tents or made them

into bags for carrying water, or into sandals. The goats were so valuable to the poor nomads that they could seldom afford to use them for food.

Muhammad Dib raised his head and stared through the haze at the intense blue of the Dead Sea in the distance. Its waters are heavy with salt and minerals, and only microscopic life exists in that huge inland sea—the lowest spot on the face of the earth, and one of the hottest!

Dib sighed, and dreamed of cool, green Bethlehem where his tribe was headed. They had things to trade and sell, and there would be fun to be had in the small town. And there would be danger and excitement! Fighting was going on between Jews and Arabs, as the British gave up their mandate and began to leave the Holy Land, and the Jews were determined to establish Israel as their homeland once again.

Dib and his people were not particularly concerned who won. To them, the troubles meant that many things were scarce in Palestine, so they could smuggle things into that country from Transjordan, sell them at a good price, and thus earn more than their usual meager living. This was why Dib and his people, the Ta-amirah tribe, were far from their usual route. They had to avoid the

guards at the bridge, and the route through the barren Wadi Qumran, as that isolated area from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea was called, was safer. It was so hot and so desolate that few people traveled there, and almost no one lived there except an occasional band of thieves.

Still, the goats had to be grazed, and it was Muhammad Dib's job to guard them as they wandered about in search of the dry scrub which was so scarce in that wasteland. And at the thought of his goats, Dib's eyes wandered in the direction of the foothills where they grazed. Automatically he began to count them: "Thirteen, fourteen, fif—"

Only fifteen? Where was the other one?

Dib jumped to his feet. His keen eyes swept over the hills beyond the herd. He saw nothing. He looked toward the Ain Feshkha well near the camp, the only fresh water for miles and miles. The missing goat was nowhere in sight!

Dib ran toward the herd and began to search around the boulders at the foot of the hills. His eyes kept sweeping back and forth, unaware now of the blowing sand and intense heat. His search took him up the hill. Higher and higher he climbed, and still no sign of the missing animal.

Muhammad Dib lifted his eyes to the eastern sky and prayed to his God for help: "Allah! Help me find that goat!"

Tired and weary, and fearful of the punishment he would surely get from Sheik Abdullah if he returned without the goat, Dib climbed still higher. It was a terrible situation. Dib feared the disgrace that would be his if he failed to find his charge.

By now he was high in the mountain, and the remainder of his herd seemed only tiny black dots far below.

"Ah," he thought happily, as he spied a black hole gaping in the side of a rocky hill, "perhaps my goat went in that hole!"

Dib ran over to inspect the hole more closely. Perhaps it was cool in there and the goat had gone in to escape the sun's heat. Then Dib shrugged his shoulders. "Goats are accustomed to the heat of the sun. He's not in there."

Still, having climbed so far, it would be foolish to go back without making sure.

Muhammad Dib halfheartedly tossed a rock into the hole.

He froze into stillness.

Dib had not heard the bleating of a goat, but he had heard something else!

He drew his short curved dagger from his waistband, and stood alert, listening. The desert was soundless. He could almost hear the silence. Nothing moved.

Yet Dib had heard something!

He crept closer to the hole. He hesitated, then slowly bent down, picked up another stone, and tossed it into the hole.

Again the strange sound echoed!

“*Thieves!*” Dib thought, and he turned and fled down the hillside, his heart beating wildly.

In his mad scramble down the hill, Dib almost fell over the missing goat. It was calmly chewing on a dried bush growing from beneath a huge boulder.

Muhammad Dib felt instant relief from his fears. He stopped, caught his breath while glancing back toward the black hole now far above him. Then he turned to his goat.

“Shoo! Evil one!” he scolded. “Allah protect you from my anger!”

Dib slapped the goat on the backside and chased him back to the others, then started to drive them toward the black tents of his people.

He would have to tell Musa, his friend, about this. Perhaps tomorrow Musa would come out



Dib spied a black hole in the side of a rocky hill

with him and explore the hole, and they could find what had made those strange sounds. They might even find something valuable and Sheik Abdullah would order a goat for a feast. The thought of goat meat made Dib hurry his herd toward the camp. Night was coming on rapidly.

At the camp, all the tents had been pitched. The few camels were safely hobbled, goat-hair ropes tying their front feet so that they could move only a few inches at a time. They could not wander very far and would be easy to collect.

Only the sound of muffled talk from around a small fire greeted Muhammad Dib as he drove the goats into the simple thorn-hedged stockade. A bright moon illuminated the desert around Ain Feshkha by this time, and Dib shivered in the chill that came as soon as the sun disappeared.

The Bedouin tribesmen were sitting near the flickering flames as Dib crept closer. They talked of war and of the past, of how and where they could best dispose of the supplies they were smuggling to Bethlehem, and what they would buy with the money they received.

One or two of the tribesmen greeted Dib with "*Ya Salaam*, Dib. Peace be with you" as he took

his place in the friendly circle. Dib searched the squatting figures, looking for Musa among them, and saw him sitting a little beyond the firelit circle, half asleep.

Dib nudged his friend. Musa listened intently as Muhammad Dib whispered eagerly to him of the day's adventures.

"Tomorrow," Musa said bravely, "we will go to the hills and enter the hole. If we find something we can sell in Bethlehem, Sheik Abdullah will commend us and be well pleased."

The following day the excited Muhammad Dib and Musa returned to the hills, and soon found the black hole they were seeking.

"We must not enter together," Musa argued. "If there are thieves inside, one of us must be on guard outside and ready to run for help."

"Then I shall wait outside while you explore the hole," Dib said.

"But you, Muhammad Dib, found the hole. It is only right that you should enter first."

Dib was not convinced, but he finally agreed to be the first inside the hole.

As Dib inched his way forward through the nar-

row opening, the air became cool and smelled dry and musty. He crawled on hands and knees, and he could feel the passage dip downward as he eased along. After several feet, Dib found suddenly that he could stand. He could barely see, but some light came through the hole and his eyes quickly adjusted to the gloom. Dib discovered that he was in a room. It wasn't just an ordinary cave, but a real room! Almost twice his height, the room was only about six feet wide, but the walls were covered with weird shadows as the light filtered in from outside.

As he turned his head, Muhammad Dib's eyes grew big at the sight he beheld. It was the most astonishing thing he had ever seen!

Tall jars lined the walls!

It was just like the story of Ali Baba and the cave of the Forty Thieves.

Dib stared at the bits of broken pottery scattered about, then moved forward cautiously toward the big jars.

Suddenly a foot scraped behind him. Dib twirled, his hand on his dagger.

It was Musa. "I could not wait," Musa said breathlessly. "What have we found?"

Dib let out his breath and looked angrily at

Musa. "You frighten me, then ask, 'What have we found?' Have you no feeling?"

Musa's face tensed. "Forgive me, Dib. I am sorry. I had no desire to frighten you."

Dib relaxed. "Perhaps you did not," he admitted grudgingly. Then he smiled. "Look, Musa!"

Dib pointed toward the jars. "Are they not queer-looking things?" He stooped down and picked up a piece of broken pottery.

"Old jars!" Musa said. "They are just old pots!"

"Musa!" Dib exclaimed. "This must have caused the strange noise that startled me yesterday. I broke this jar when I threw the stone into the cave."

Musa made a loud clucking sound with his tongue, and looked slyly at Dib. Suddenly he sneezed. "*Sáyir rabra!* It is dusty," he said. "Dib, let us look inside the jars."

Muhammad Dib stepped carefully to the nearest jar, watchful and alert. He pushed the lid aside, then stepped quickly back. When nothing jumped out at them, the two boys lifted off the heavy lid.

"Ugh!"

They dropped the lid and held their noses. A terrible smell came out of the jar, and the boys almost choked.

When the boys stopped coughing and sneezing, they peered inside and saw some very curious-looking objects, black and dusty.

Dib reached inside and closed his hands over one of the strange objects. He pulled it out, then reached in and pulled out another and another.

The oblong things were covered with something hard and black and bound with cloth.

Dib shook one of the cylinders. He heard nothing, but dust filled the air and the odor was worse than before.

“What are they?” Musa asked.

“I—I do not know,” Dib said. “*Şâr ‘atm*. It is ark. Let us take them outside and look at them more closely.”



CHAPTER TWO *Is It a Treasure?*

MUHAMMAD DIB grasped two of the fat rolls, and Musa took another. They crawled back through the tunnel, then squatted in the hot sun outside, panting from their efforts, and inspected the odd rolls which varied considerably in length and width. Roughly twelve inches in circumference, they varied from about nine inches to eighteen inches in length.

“Surely these must have been in that dark place a long time,” Dib observed. “See, Musa, they are wrapped in strips of cloth, but it is hard to see for they are so dusty and black.”

“They smell terrible, Dib,” Musa complained. “Look, the end of this one is loose.”

Dib took the object from Musa and looked at it closely. He pulled away a piece of the end. But it was not a piece—it was only the end of a long strip of material which had been tightly wrapped around the object.

“Why, Musa, these are scrolls! See, they bear writings. I’ve seen the like in Bethlehem.” He brushed again at the dust that clung to the scroll he held.

A scroll is a kind of book that was much used in ancient times. With the materials that were then known, the writing down of important teachings and messages was done on long strips of leather, papyrus, and sometimes sheets of beaten copper. When these long strips were tightly rolled—much as we might roll a map today—they were easy to carry and convenient to store. It was a great improvement over the old method of recording things on clay tablets or on stone. And in that part of the world writing is much different. Their books begin at the back and are read from right to left.

Musa stood up and spat on the ground. “Writing! Books! I thought Allah had presented us with a treasure!” He was very annoyed. “Bah! Dib, you are a fool to get so excited about nothing!

That was a long and hard climb up here and I could have been sitting in the shade of the tents!”

“But, Musa, sometimes these things have value! They might be writings of the ancient ones. I’ve heard of people in the towns who pay well for old things. Let us take them to Sheik Abdullah. He will know. Perhaps these can be sold for money.”

Musa’s spirits picked up at the renewed hope of reward and, urged by Dib, he agreed. “Very well, Dib,” he said finally. “It is often said that Allah protects fools, and you may be right.”

Slowly the boys made their way back down the rocky mountainside toward their encampment, carrying the three scrolls with them.

Hot and tired, Dib and Musa were glad as they neared the black wool tents which were their homes. The Bedouins carry their tents wherever they travel, folding them around the frames and packing them on their camels, then pitching them again when they come to a place where there is enough grazing to last a few days or weeks.

There were nine tents in the group where Dib and Musa were camped; seven were pitched in a semicircle and two were placed behind them. The tents were held up by a long center pole and two

shorter ones on either side, then pegged to the ground or held down with bags of sand if the ground was too soft to hold pegs. All of the fifty people of the group used these tents.

Scrawny chickens scratched in the sand and stones around the tents, grubbing for ants and other insects. A few sheep and goats wandered around the tents or sprawled in whatever shade they could find. Occasionally, an angry shriek reached the ears of Dib and Musa as a Bedouin woman shooed away a hen or a goat that had imprudently wandered into a tent.

Sheepskins and bright wool blankets were spread over the low-slanting roofs of the tents. The broiling sun would bake them clean of the previous night's sleep—very important hygiene in a land where water is so scarce. The sides of the tents were rolled halfway up the frame to let air pass freely through during the heat of the day. At night then, when the sides were lowered, the warm air that had been thus trapped made the tents cozy and snug. A few tents had brightly patterned rugs, brought from Damascus when the tribe wandered near that city.

Black-clad figures of women squatted over small charcoal braziers, cooking for the men. Here and

there, an old crone sat in the sun mumbling, shooting occasionally at the browsing animals. A few tribesmen lay sprawled beside one tent.

Most of the tribesmen, as usual, squatted in a circle outside the Sheik's large tent, smoking pipes filled with sweet herb tobacco, talking unhurriedly, indifferent to passing time, free and at peace with their world in the manner beloved of all nomadic peoples. Dib and Musa could see, far in the distance, the black dots of grazing goats. Other boys that day had to take their turns grazing the animals.

Heaps of melons and piles of striped woolen sacks of millet grain and native barley bordered each tent. Goatskins, filled with water, hung suspended from poles, the air passing through them keeping the water deliciously cool. Brass trays and bowls, clay pots and gourds lay in small heaps on the brightly striped bags the Bedouins wove from the wool of their sheep and goats. When the tribe was on the move, these same bags served to carry pots and pans and all the household articles of the tribe.

Two boys, older than Dib and Musa but not yet old enough to spend all their time with the men, were playing a game, hurling stones at a broken

clay pot. They used slings made of leather—just like the one used by David when he slew Goliath—and the boys were very clever at this trick. Three young girls peeked at the boys from beneath the side of a tent, giggling and calling to them if one of the boys missed the target.

Three or four Bedouin babies crawled or tottered around the tents, chasing the chickens and goats, completely free from danger or harm of any kind.

“*Kîf hâlak?* How are you?” the two boys called to Dib and Musa when they saw them coming. “What have you got there?”

“We have found a treasure to sell for money,” Dib answered, his white teeth gleaming through a broad smile.

Musa, who was not so sure, merely picked up a stone and hurled it at the broken clay pot. He laughed gleefully as the pot shattered.

Dib and Musa approached the group of men around the Sheik. As they drew close, they touched their fingertips to their foreheads, lips, and hearts. The Sheik did likewise. Then they smacked each other’s open palms, the customary greeting of the Bedouins meaning that all is well between the greeters and that no weapon is con-

cealed in the hand. The touching of foreheads, lips, and hearts meant "know no evil, speak no evil, feel no evil."

"*Salaam*, Dib. Peace. *Salaam*, Musa," said Sheik Abdullah. "What manner of things have you in your arms?"

"We have found a treasure," Dib said excitedly.

The tribesmen gathered close to Dib and Musa, looking at the scrolls the boys carried and listening to their Sheik as he questioned Dib—where had they found them? Was there anything else in the cave? Dib told him about the lost goat and how he had persuaded Musa to go with him to explore.

The Sheik did not chide Muhammad Dib, and Dib was greatly relieved. The Sheik even seemed interested in the scrolls the boys had found.

Sheik Abdullah examined the scrolls carefully. He could see that they bore writing, but he could not read it. He could also see that they did, indeed, look very ancient. But that was about all he could tell for certain. Sheik Abdullah was a man of some knowledge and learning and, when he was younger, had even traveled more than once as far as Jerusalem—quite a feat in a land where motor transport is still not common. The Sheik could read a little Arabic, but when he broke off

a small piece of the scroll and turned it this way and that, he still could not read the letters. The material was very old and cracked, with a strange black stuff clinging to it. This pitchlike substance had been coated on the scrolls to help preserve them. Dust was still thick on the scroll the Sheik held.

“I cannot read these words,” he said finally, shaking his head. “These are not the words of our tongue. They are not Arabic. But I believe I know what they are.”

A tense excitement settled over the listening tribesmen. Dib and Musa glanced at each other hopefully, well pleased that the Sheik seemed to find their discovery of such interest.

“These are Syriac words,” the Sheik said.

“Perhaps the Syrian people in Bethlehem will understand them, then,” one tribesman suggested.

“We shall see,” Sheik Abdullah said. He looked at the faces about him. “These scrolls may be of value. I have heard of such findings of the ancient peoples that brought both esteem and great wealth to the finders. We shall see.”

The Sheik remained thoughtful for a few minutes, then reached a decision. He ordered two camels to be loaded with goods for trade and sale.



The small party set out, Dib leading one of the camels

Dib and Musa were to herd the goats and two sheep that were to be sold. And with one other tribesman they would hasten to Bethlehem, leaving the remainder of the tribe to follow leisurely or wait for their return.

Despite the intense heat, the small party set out from camp at once. Dib led one of the camels and Musa brought up the rear, clucking in soft, guttural tones to the frisky black animals. It was an excited group.

As the first golden streaks of daylight were breaking on the horizon the following morning, they reached the outskirts of the small town of Bethlehem. The *Muezzin*, the holy man, was just calling the faithful Mohammedan worshipers to prayer. Dib, Musa, and the Sheik turned toward Mecca, sank to their knees, and alternately raised their hands toward heaven and bent down to touch the earth with hands and forehead in prayer and submission to the will of Allah.

Their prayers did not take long, and they soon rose, hurrying after the tribesman who had watched the animals. He would say his prayers later in the day, in some quiet corner, just as they had done.

Bethlehem was stirring with the activity of the coming day when they reached the large square that was the market place. It surely looked much as it must have in Biblical days. What modern things there were seemed remote and hardly noticeable beside the age-old customs of the people.

Whitewashed mud houses, with piles of fodder and fuel stored on the flat roofs, surrounded the square. Crooked, narrow streets ran from all sides of the square into the sprawling town. Here and there a stone building emphasized the shabbiness of the others. Shrines and holy places of all religions dotted the horizon. Spires and slim minarets from which the Moslem holy men sang the call to prayer across the rooftops rose above the lower houses.

Muhammad Dib and Musa herded their few animals into a makeshift pen to await buyers from the butcher shops and cafés. Grunting and groaning in the miserable way known only to camels, these two animals were forced to their knees on the sandy ground at one side of the market place that is reserved for such purposes. When the camels were at last down so that they rested on the big soft pad under their ribs, the Sheik tied a rope around their folded knees so they could not

rise again until released. Then the tribesmen unloaded their sacks of grain, watermelons, and goat cheese, and the scarce items from Transjordan they had smuggled in. The scrolls were carefully laid to one side.

The market was a bright, noisy place, bustling with activity. Some merchants had their goods spread on cloths on the ground. Open-fronted shops around the square offered a variety of goods used by people in that climate. Here was a tailor who made loose, flowing garments; here a shoemaker; here a lamp seller; here a stall that had many different items, even the matches that were so expensive but so much easier to use than the old flint and steel the Bedouins generally used. Here was a café, with small tables spread in front under an awning. Arabs and people of Syrian and other nationalities sat drinking thick black coffee from tiny cups, or sweet hot tea with sugar and lemon in tall glasses. Here came a man with a brightly polished brass barrel on his back, heavily ornamented and tied with bright wool ribbons. He sold soft drinks, pouring them from flexible spouts into small brass cups for his customers who were thirsty but who did not have time to sit at the cafés. A few street jugglers amused the gathering crowds.

Bethlehem in the summertime is a hot, dusty place, but to Dib it was green, cool, and lovely after the harsh desert he was used to. Flies were everywhere, tormenting animals and settling on humans. Many people carried fly-whisks—long-handled, often very fancy, sticks with long horse-hair tails at one end which are used to keep flies away. Veiled women flitted in and out of the crowds.

Here were piles of oranges from Jaffa, green bananas, pomegranates, limes, figs, dates. The owners squatted beside their merchandise, swiping at the flies when they were not engaged in the long bargaining so dearly beloved of the Arabic peoples. Time for them is something to be enjoyed, for life is slow. Why hurry and spoil the politeness and opportunity for the matching of wits?

Meat stalls and sweetstuffs, and more of the same, completed the market place. . . .

By noon, the Sheik had traded or sold all of his tribe's goods, and before embarking on the shopping they had to do for their people, the four Bedouins went to a café for tea and a meal from their own supply of cheese and flat, pancakelike bread. It was decided that while the Sheik and

his man set off to find the friend who might buy the scrolls, Dib and Musa were to watch the camels and could take turns wandering in the market place.

Sheik Abdullah was highly pleased with himself. He had done well in trade, so he set off in high spirits to find his friend, the dealer in old things, one Khalil Eskander. It did not take the Sheik long to find this man, and over tall glasses of sweet tea, after the usual greetings that led up to the business at hand, he told him the story of the scrolls and produced them for Khalil Eskander to examine. Sheik Abdullah assured Eskander that the writings on the scrolls must be very ancient and surely worth a good price.

Khalil Eskander, whose name meant Good Friend Alexander, looked over the scrolls, squinting his eyes and glancing at Sheik Abdullah, trying to estimate how much he should offer—if anything. The story of the finding of the scrolls had interested him highly and he wondered what mystery from the age-old desert was here.

He took one of the scrolls and unrolled a piece of it. A small piece broke off at the end and, examining it more closely, Khalil Eskander saw that

it was actually two strips of leather sewn together, making one long narrow strip.

“Perhaps they are old, perhaps they are not. I cannot say about the writing, though it may be ancient Syrian. I cannot read it,” he said.

“*Ana bṣaddkāk*. I believe you,” Sheik Abdullah said. “But can you not give us a price? Will you buy them from us?”

The Syrian merchant cocked his head on one side and looked at the Sheik. “I must confer with a friend before I give you answer. Return later and I may tell you something.”

“But we must return to our camp tonight,” the Sheik said. “I will be happy to dispose of these to you now if you give me a good price. They are surely valuable.”

“Valuable? Why? How do you know?”

Sheik Abdullah could not answer such a direct question. He could not read the scrolls and could not even tell if they said anything of value or interest.

Khalil Eskander, being a good businessman, did not wish to buy goods he could not sell at a profit. He asked more questions about where the scrolls came from and whether others were to be found

in the cave. Sheik Abdullah had to tell him that he did not know.

“If you return to the market next week, and perhaps bring more of these books with you, I may have an answer. I shall then tell you if I will buy them and what price I am willing to pay. *Shû bitkûl?* What do you say?”

What Sheik Abdullah did not know was that Eskander had a good friend, another merchant, who knew much more than he about old documents. Eskander wished to consult with this friend before naming a price. Frauds were common, and one had to be careful.

When Dib saw the Sheik returning, he jumped up and raced to meet him. Seizing the Sheik’s sleeve in his excitement, Dib cried anxiously, “Did you sell them? Did you get a good price for the scrolls, Sheik Abdullah?”

“Calm yourself, Dib,” the Sheik replied. “Such excitement in this heat is not good for you. No. I did not sell them and it follows, as the goat follows the grass, that I did not get a good price.”

Dib’s face fell. Tears glistened in his eyes as thoughts of a feast faded from his mind.

“Do not be too unhappy, boy. You did well.” Sheik Abdullah put his arm around Dib. “I left

the scrolls with Khalil Eskander. They will be safe with him and we shall come again soon to Bethlehem. By that time he hopes to have sold them for a good price. Meantime, you may search further and see what else lies in the cave. Eskander requested more scrolls if they are to be found."

Muhammad Dib scuffed his bare toes in the sand.

"You are a good boy, Dib," the Sheik said kindly, "and you deserve a reward. Be patient and it will surely come."

It was a less happy little group that led the camels back from Bethlehem to the desert at Wadi Qumran.

As they plodded along, Dib and Musa discussed what they should do next.

"I do not think I shall climb that pile of rocks again to search for old rubbish!" Musa said. "There are better things to do."

Dib, who had recovered from his depression with the Sheik's words of comfort, was not so easily put off. "But, Musa," he insisted, "Sheik Abdullah is certain that we will be paid when next we come to Bethlehem. Just imagine, if we have more old things to sell, we shall get a much bigger reward. Why, Musa, we might even be

able to buy a camel! Think what that would mean!" His eyes were shining. "We can go wherever we like. It will be so much easier than walking all the time. Why, a camel can carry both of us easily. Let us try the cave again, Musa," he pleaded. "I promise that if we do not earn a reward next time we visit Bethlehem, I will give you . . ." He hesitated. What could he give Musa? He had very little to give that was worth anything. Then he thought of his most precious possession. "I will give you this fine dagger that was given me by my father."

Musa looked at the dagger at Dib's waist with calculation. "Very well, Dib," he said. "But no tricks, remember. If you trick me, I shall give you a beating."

Back in Bethlehem, Khalil Eskander sent a message to his friend George Isaiah, who belonged to the same Syrian church as he in Jerusalem. Khalil told him of the Bedouin who had offered the scrolls for sale, and together they studied them when Isaiah visited Bethlehem.

"It looks like Syrian writing, and yet I am not sure," Isaiah said. "I have never seen anything quite like it before."

“We must be careful that we do not make a mistake,” Eskander said.

“Oh, they appear to be very old, all right. We can probably sell them to an antique dealer or to a merchant of curiosities if nothing else,” Isaiah insisted. He was bent over the scroll which he had partially unrolled on the table. He looked at it through a magnifying glass. “Look at these strange marks along the sides. What could they mean?”

But Eskander’s thoughts were elsewhere. He did not think now that he was going to make much money from these odd things.

“Let us forget the business,” Eskander said. “I shall give them back to the Bedouin when he returns to the market.”

But George Isaiah was not convinced. “No,” he insisted. “Be not hasty. I cannot tell you, honestly, what these scrolls say or of what age and importance they may be. I think I should take them to someone in Jerusalem who reads other languages. Perhaps he can tell me something about them.”

Eskander was interested once more. “If he thinks they are interesting, do you suppose he will make an offer to purchase them?”

Isaiah was not sure. "We have them for at least a week. What is there to lose by trying?"

"True enough. If he thinks they may have value, we may get a few pounds cash for them. With luck we might make a good profit."

"Perhaps," Isaiah agreed. "But let us see."



CHAPTER THREE *The Mystery*
Deepens

ON THE return journey to the well at Ain Feshkha, Muhammad Dib and Musa schemed and planned to explore the cave again, and they agreed to keep a sharp lookout for any other holes they might find.

While they were gone, Eskander and Isaiah spent a busy time in Bethlehem and Jerusalem.

The Old City of Jerusalem, still much as it was in Bible days, lies at the heart of the big new city which has grown up around it. At the center of the Old City there stands an aged monastery which contains a wonderful library of old Syriac manuscripts. This is the Syrian Orthodox Monastery of St. Mark, and there is a tradition that it stands on the site of the house of Saint Mark's mother,

where the disciples of Jesus gathered for prayer when Saint Peter came to them after his miraculous deliverance from prison. There is another story which says that this is also the site of the house wherein the disciples and Jesus held the Last Supper.

The Metropolitan (Archbishop) Athanasius Yeshue Samuel was head of this Syrian monastery and a scholar of wide renown, and George Isaiah persuaded Eskander to return to Jerusalem with him to take one of Muhammad Dib's scrolls to the Archbishop.

Archbishop Samuel, at first glance, was a fierce-looking man. But when he spoke in his soft voice and his brown eyes twinkled above his black beard, his face became warm and friendly. He wore a long black robe and an onion-shaped cap upon his head of thick black hair. Around his neck hung a heavy gold cross.

Eskander and Isaiah were received by the Archbishop in his book-lined study. After the usual polite greetings Isaiah told the story of how the scrolls had been found. He handed the Archbishop the scroll.

The Archbishop's face was alive with curiosity as he listened to the tale. He had always been very much interested in old manuscripts, and it was

with great care that he now took hold of the scroll and turned it around in close inspection.

“And they are very old, I’m sure, and extremely valuable,” Isaiah insisted.

Archbishop Samuel merely glanced at Isaiah and continued to study the scroll. Then his white teeth glistened as he smiled. “There are many things sold in the market place which are said to be old but which prove to be counterfeit. With these uncertain times in the Holy Land, one can never be sure. Let us make a little test.”

Carefully, the Archbishop broke off a tiny piece of the scroll. He laid it on a small tray and touched a match to it. A dreadful stench filled the room, and the Archbishop sniffed knowingly. “It is real parchment or real leather, I am sure,” he said. “But there is something else, also,” he added suspiciously.

Fearful for his profits, Eskander thought fast. “The Bedouin said all the scrolls were wrapped in strips of cloth! They were wrapped like mummies!”

“And they claim to have found them near Ain Feshkha?”

“That is right,” Eskander replied. “The Bedouin boy found them there in a cave, just as I have said it.”

Archbishop Samuel knew very well what a barren, desolate place the area around Wadi Qumran was. He also knew that no people other than nomads had passed through it for centuries. No one had ever lived there, to his knowledge. Perhaps the scrolls were, indeed, incredibly ancient manuscripts. The smell from the portion he had burned indicated as much.

Taking great care, the Archbishop slowly unrolled a bit of the scroll. A frown creased his forehead as he bent over the markings on the inside. Then he leaned back.

Eskander and Isaiah were disappointed. From the look on the Archbishop's face, it was apparent something was wrong.

Mumbling through his beard, the Archbishop said, "Indeed, it would appear that this is very old. But the writing is not Syrian. This is Hebrew, and I am not able to read that language."

Eskander and Isaiah stood up. There seemed to be little use in trying to sell Hebrew writing to a Syrian library.

"But wait a moment," the Archbishop said. "I might wish to purchase them just as curiosities. They are strange, to be sure, but I am very fond of old books."

“What will you give for the scrolls?” Eskander asked.

“I might be willing to pay as much as ten pounds [about thirty-five dollars] for them,” the Archbishop replied cautiously. “We shall see first what the others are like.” He too stood up. “When are the Bedouins to return?”

“Perhaps next week,” Isaiah assured him.

“Then I shall keep this one until you return to me with the others. We shall be meeting again shortly,” the Archbishop said as he showed the two men to the door.

After his visitors had gone, the Archbishop hurried back to his desk and sat staring at the scroll lying there. He put a weight on one end and began slowly unrolling more of the long strip. His shining eyes wandered back and forth across the scroll and occasionally his fingers brushed it gently, almost reverently.

“Incredible,” he murmured to himself. His mind wandered over possibilities concerning the object lying on his desk. Might hands from the days of Christ have written this document, perhaps hands from an even earlier period? It was possible, he thought, that the eyes of Christ Himself might have looked upon this ancient writing.

He peered at it more closely, longing with all his heart to be able to read what was written there. The things this scroll had been a silent witness to in the long centuries of its existence! Archbishop Samuel's imagination almost ran away with him. Why, it was possible this might even be a lost book of the Bible! He sighed, finally, and rerolled the long manuscript, then put it in a safe place to await the Bedouins' return. The Archbishop was convinced that he had something very rare. Once more the mysterious desert had yielded up a secret.

When they returned to the Bedouin camp, Dib and Musa made plans to climb to the cave once more. This time another tribesman, a young man, accompanied them. This man had decided that he too could perhaps earn something for his trouble. But he was a surly man and kicked bits of broken pottery about the cave in his eager searching. Two jars were in perfect condition and the tribesman was about to break one of them when Dib called out.

“Do not break it! Those jars will be useful for carrying water. Let us take them back with us. The women will be well pleased.”

“Take them yourself,” the man said roughly. “I will not be burdened carrying them down this mountain just to please women.”

Dib and Musa carefully set the two jars outside the cave.

“Look, Musa,” cried Dib when they went back inside the cave. “I have found two more of the scrolls.” Under a heap of broken scraps of pottery and bits of torn scrolls, all mixed together with dust and sand and stones, Dib had uncovered two more scrolls. Now he had five, counting the ones they had left in Bethlehem with Khalil Eskander. Dib was delighted.

“If Allah is good to us, Dib,” said Musa, catching the spirit of search and eagerness, “we may both own camels of our own.”

The tribesman dared not take the scrolls away from the boys; besides, he had found three scrolls himself. Nevertheless, he pushed Musa aside and again started kicking about in the stones and dirt for other scrolls. But there were no more. Only bits of broken pottery and scraps of other scrolls were left lying about the floor of the cave.

“Come,” the tribesman said to the boys, “it grows dark. There is nothing further to be found here but rubbish. Let us go down from this high

place before it becomes night." Not waiting for an answer, he pushed his way back through the entrance.

"Let us go, Dib," Musa said. "He is right. There is nothing more of value here."

Sheik Abdullah had lost interest in the possible value of the scrolls after the failure in Bethlehem. He refused to go back just to try to sell this new collection which had been found.

"But we left the scrolls with the merchant," Dib dared to argue. "Surely you will not let the Syrian cheat us, and there may be a price offered when we return!"

"I do not think so, Dib," the Sheik replied. "It will be a useless journey, and we have nothing more to sell in the market. No! You must wait until we have more goods ready for sale. Then we shall go to Bethlehem and we will see what has happened to the scrolls we left there."

Muhammad Dib was disheartened. He grumbled and complained to his friend Musa, but Musa was not convinced. "Sheik Abdullah will not let us be cheated if the scrolls have value. Take heart, Dib, for this may still be the cause of a big feast."

Reluctantly, Dib had to bide his time until the



Dib's sly kinsman wanted to sell his scrolls

Sheik again allowed them a trip to Bethlehem.

Several weeks passed before they finally set off for Bethlehem. On the first Saturday of the month of Tammuz (July), Sheik Abdullah again paid a visit to Khalil Eskander. This time the tribesman who had found the other three scrolls accompanied him. He too would see what price *he* could get for *his* scrolls.

“What of our business with the scrolls?” the Sheik asked when he met Eskander. “Have you arranged a price?”

“Possibly,” replied Eskander, guardedly. “Possibly. But I expected you long ago.”

“We were delayed,” the Sheik said. “What of the price?”

“One moment,” Eskander said. Eskander was very busy that day. He was not at all sure that this business would bring him profit, and the price the Archbishop had mentioned, if he remembered offering it at all, seemed very disappointing.

Eskander made a decision. He would not personally waste any more time with fruitless trips to Jerusalem. Taking a pen, he wrote a hurried note to his friend George Isaiah, and handed it to Sheik Abdullah.

“I cannot help you further here in Bethlehem,” he said. “If you will take the other scrolls you have and with this note give them to George Isaiah, he will take you to the only customer we have found. See, I have written the place where he is to be found on this paper.”

It was a bitter blow for Dib when the Sheik returned with the other tribesman and told the news of his visit to Eskander.

“Shall we then go to Jerusalem?” Dib asked anxiously.

“It is not so far, *walad*, and it is but little out of our way. Let us go. We will return to Ain Feshkha by way of Jerusalem.”

The few days' journey meant nothing to the nomads as they slowly plodded along with their camels. George Isaiah was not surprised to see them when Sheik Abdullah, Dib, Musa, and the other Ta-amirah tribesman arrived at his house. Dib had brought his two other scrolls, Isaiah had two, the Archbishop had Dib's fifth, and the tribesman had the three he had found.

It was an odd-looking party that set off for the Monastery of St. Mark. When they neared the gates, Musa was told to stay with the animals.

A priest opened the gate to their knocking, and Isaiah, as spokesman, asked permission to see the Archbishop.

“Pray, what is your business?” the priest demanded. He was a stuffy, rather foolish man.

“We have business with him,” Isaiah said, “and we wish to show him these old documents.”

The priest held out his hand, and Sheik Abdullah politely handed the man one of the scrolls.

The priest looked at it. The scroll was dirty, and it smelled bad. The priest snorted and handed it back.

“That is not Syrian, it is Hebrew! This is a Syrian monastery! You have made a mistake.”

Before George Isaiah could utter a word of protest, the gates were slammed in their faces!



CHAPTER FOUR *The Scrolls Are
Separated*

ISAIAH, Sheik Abdullah, Dib, and the other tribesman were very angry at such rude behavior.

The tribesman raised his fist and shook it angrily at the gates. “*Ya ibn kalb!* Oh, son of a dog!” he cried. Then he spoke rudely to his Sheik. “I shall sell my scrolls elsewhere. It was a long, hard climb up that mountain and I shall gain some small profit from it, if I can.” He spoke passionately, and stormed off in another direction.

Sheik Abdullah shook his head sadly. He could not argue with the man, and called wishes of good fortune at the departing tribesman. The Sheik, Dib, and Isaiah, followed by Musa with the camels, went off in the opposite direction.

This was the real beginning of the confusion

about the scrolls, and why different scholars owned different portions of them at a later date.

“Are there none others who would be interested in the scrolls?” Dib asked Isaiah.

The merchant thought. He was not sure.

Sheik Abdullah was thoroughly annoyed by this latest setback, but he was not a man to give in easily once he had made up his mind. Now he had an idea. “Since these scrolls are written in Hebrew, or you say the Archbishop thinks they are,” he said to Isaiah, “then why do we not sell them to the Jews? There are many here in Jerusalem. It is their language. Surely they will be more interested.”

“That is possible,” Isaiah said, unhappy at this turn of events, and visions of his profit from the transaction fading.

“I know of one such Jewish merchant here whom I have had dealings with in the past. He is to be found at the café by the Jaffa Gate. I will go there and seek him.”

“I shall return to my house,” Isaiah said. “Truly, I am sorry we did not make good business. Tell me how you fared before you leave the city.”

Sheik Abdullah bid farewell to Isaiah, then, with

Dib and Musa, trudged toward the Jaffa Gate carrying the four scrolls.

The Jaffa Gate is set in the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem. It is approached from outside along Mamillah Road. Although these walls were ancient in the days of Christ, the walls that now exist are believed to be those that were built by King David on even older foundations. One portion of the wall that contains the Jaffa Gate is thought to have been built by Nehemiah in the fifth century B.C.

After Sheik Abdullah led Dib and Musa through the narrow, arched doorway, they pushed into crooked, winding streets which once were part of King David's citadel. Seldom more than six or eight feet wide, many of these narrow streets had not seen sunlight for hundreds of years. Dib paid no attention to the strong odor in the area. He knew that centuries of crowded living had left the odor, and it would not soon disappear.

Open-fronted booths lined the narrow streets, several stories of ramshackle dwelling places rising above them to give the streets a closed-in feeling. In some of the booths, silversmiths were at work on native jewelry, and Dib and Musa mar-

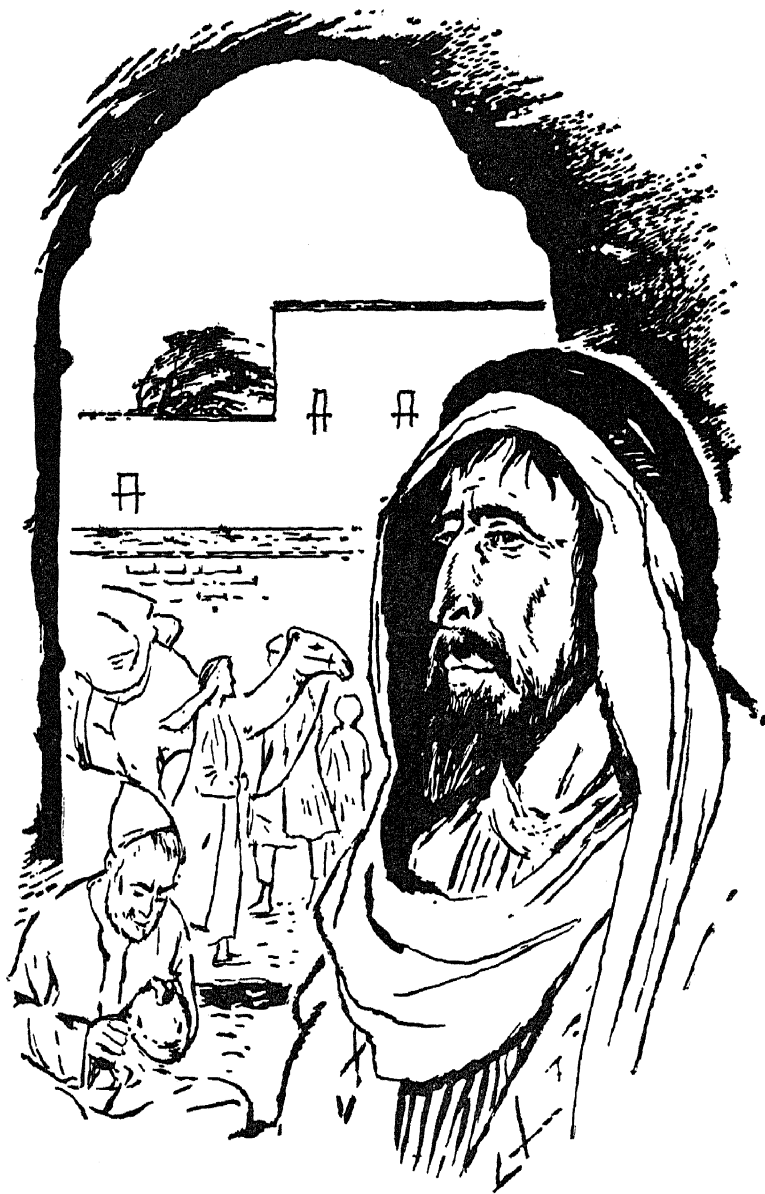
veled when they saw a glass blower fashioning tumblers and lamp globes of thin, bubbly green glass. Furniture makers worked with wood and raffia. Shoemakers and tradesmen and craftsmen of all kinds caught the excited eyes of the Bedouin boys. The streets were swarming with people.

Several times the Sheik had to turn and help Musa, for the camels frequently shied as they passed an especially noisy shop or when the antics of the city Arabs frightened them. Sheep and goats, being led to butcher shops chased through the streets in little groups of five or six, guided and shooed along by their owners' voices and long switches. Little wonder that Musa had trouble with the camels—they were more used to the quiet placidity of the desert and seldom saw towns any larger than Bethlehem.

At the end of the narrow street beside the Jaffa Gate, Sheik Abdullah found the café he sought.

"Stay close to this wall," he instructed Musa. "You must wait outside and guard the camels carefully while Dib and I find the Jewish merchant."

The café was a busy, bustling place, jammed with small round tables. Behind the small counter, shelves held row on row of tiny pots for making coffee. Other shelves held tall, sparkling



The way was narrow at the Jaffa Gate

glasses. Dib was attracted by the clacking of counters on boards and, looking around, saw that many of the men sitting at the tables were playing the game he knew as *taula*, a kind of parchesi.

“Sit here, Dib,” Sheik Abdullah said before ordering tea and purchasing a handful of dried dates from a vendor. After they had finished the tea and dates, Sheik Abdullah passed among the tables searching for the merchant. He found him sitting in a dark corner of the café.

The Sheik made himself known and settled down at the table to discuss his errand. He told the merchant the story of the discovery and showed him the four scrolls he carried.

The Jewish merchant took a magnifying glass from his pocket and scrutinized the scrolls carefully. After some time he said to the Sheik, “Yes, I would like to purchase these,” and named a price.

Muhammad Dib sucked in his breath when he heard this, and his face wore a huge grin of pleasure.

“But I do not carry much money with me in these dangerous times,” the old man said. “I cannot pay you right now. If you will come to my office in the Jaffa Road, I shall pay you there. Will you come one hour from now?”

“We will meet you there,” the Sheik agreed.

At last, it seemed to Dib, the reward was within reach.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Samuel had spent the morning pacing his study impatiently. He was expecting George Isaiah and the Bedouins. Eskander had made a special effort and telephoned the Archbishop, warning him that the Bedouins and the scrolls were on the way to Jerusalem. This unusual action by Eskander only added to the Archbishop's anxiety, for he knew how few telephones there were in Bethlehem. The three days that he had allowed for the journey had now passed, and the Archbishop was certain they would arrive that morning. Though he had tried, he had been unable to locate George Isaiah.

The Archbishop had studied the scroll in his possession very carefully, and was more than ever convinced that this was a remarkable discovery. He had no proof, but in his own mind he felt certain that this scroll was older than anything yet found in that region, and that it might well be connected with the earliest days of Christianity and the Bible.

Tired of waiting, and feeling hungry, the Arch-

bishop summoned a priest and said to him, "Please let me know instantly when a group of Bedouins and a Syrian merchant arrive. I am going to lunch now, but I wish to see them as soon as they get here."

The puzzled priest stared at his Archbishop. "But—" he began, "but such a Syrian merchant and three Bedouins were at the gate this morning. They did not enter!"

"Why not?" the Archbishop demanded.

"They were unclean, and they had some dirty scrolls under their arms that they wished to sell," said the uncomfortable priest. He tried to laugh. "I knew you would not be interested, though." Seeing the sour look on his Archbishop's face, the priest hastened a further excuse. "I looked at the scrolls. Why, they weren't even Syrian! They bore Hebrew writing!"

Archbishop Samuel tried to control his temper, and his usually smiling face grew stern. He snapped out the words: "Those scrolls might well be one of the greatest treasures in existence today!"

He was very angry. "Now they may be lost to us forever. Go at once to the telephone and locate the merchant, George Isaiah. I wish to speak with him immediately!"

George Isaiah had just returned home when he

was summoned to the telephone by the Archbishop's call, and he listened in utter amazement as the worried Archbishop explained the terrible mistake made by the foolish man at the gate.

"I wish to purchase those scrolls, and you may be sure when you return that you will be admitted at once. Will you return soon?"

Isaiah hardly knew what to say. He would have to hurry if he was to do anything. He told the Archbishop that the Bedouins had gone to a Jewish merchant at the Jaffa Gate, but that he would go there immediately. Perhaps it was not too late to stop the sale of the scrolls.

Isaiah knew the café by the Jaffa Gate very well, and he hurried there as fast as he could.

Musa was squatting on the dusty road beside the camels, dozing outside the café, when he was rudely awakened by a harsh, out-of-breath voice and a rough hand shaking his shoulder.

"*Ismah, walad.* Listen, boy, where is your Sheik?" Isaiah barked.

"Inside." Musa pointed to the café sleepily.

In the café George Isaiah quickly spotted Sheik Abdullah and Muhammad Dib sitting behind tall glasses of tea. He ran to their table and dropped into a chair, hardly able to breathe.

"Did you sell the scrolls?" he panted.

“We have made arrangements to do so,” the Sheik told him. “We are to go shortly to the office of the Jewish dealer on the Jaffa Road and get payment.”

“But you can’t do that,” Isaiah said, staring in unbelief. “I do not like this. Do you not know that it is dangerous for Arabs on the Jaffa Road? That area is entirely Jewish and anything bad can happen to an Arab down there. You must not go! Besides, it was all a mistake. The man at the gate of the monastery was a fool. The Archbishop telephoned me and he wishes to buy the scrolls. He will pay a good price!”

“Nonsense!” said the Sheik. “Allah is with us and the Jew has offered a good price!”

“But you must not go there!” Isaiah was serious and he scowled. “It is possible that you might be killed and have the scrolls stolen from you.”

Sheik Abdullah sat up straight in his chair and listened.

“These are not normal times,” Isaiah said gravely. “Many strange things are happening in Jerusalem. You do not know, but I live here, I know.”

It was the truth he spoke. Fighting had been growing steadily more desperate throughout the

summer as the British began leaving the Holy Land. Jerusalem was the scene of several stormy battles. The Jews were determined that after all they had suffered during World War II they would have a land of their own. The Arabs were equally determined that the Jews would not take land which had not belonged to them for centuries. The United Nations had not had time to take over properly from the British. There was much discontent and hard feeling among the people. Where Jews and Arabs had lived peaceably together for many years, they now fought bitterly. Arabs avoided Jewish sections, Jews avoided Arab sections of the city of Jerusalem. Terrible fear and strain had been in the air for some time.

Sheik Abdullah, though aware of growing friction, could not know how bad things had become. His tribe, the Ta-amirah, were usually far from the doings of the towns and cities.

Musa stood watching from the door of the café. Dib looked at the Sheik with large anxious eyes. They had no weapons other than their short daggers.

“This talk of war is foolish,” Sheik Abdullah said. “And it does not concern the Bedouins.”

“But it was a dreadful mistake,” Isaiah insisted.

“The Archbishop wishes to buy the scrolls. The four you have and the one we left with him make five. They will fetch a good price. It is the will of Allah that I found you before you had sold them to the Jew. Truly, this is a strange state of affairs. Let us go at once to the Archbishop. I swear I speak the truth!”

Sheik Abdullah sat silently for a moment, then looked at Dib. “What say you, Dib, do we go with this one or that one?”

Dib looked at the scrolls lying wrapped in a dirty cloth on the chair beside him. He was frightened by thoughts of what might happen on the Jaffa Road. “Let us go back to the monastery,” he said.

It did not take them long to get back to the Monastery of St. Mark, and this time they had no trouble getting beyond the gates. Happily, they handed over their four scrolls to the smiling Archbishop Samuel, who promptly paid them.

Nobody is quite sure how much was paid, but it is generally agreed that it was about fifty pounds (about \$150 to \$200) for the five scrolls. One of the biggest bargains of all history!

Archbishop Samuel, after the business had been

completed, questioned Dib as to the whereabouts of the cave in which he'd found the scrolls.

"I will gladly take you there and show you," Dib said to Archbishop Samuel, "but it is a long climb and all we left in the cave were broken pots and bits of the writing."

"How large were these pieces of which you speak?" the Archbishop asked.

Dib held out his palm. "Some were the size of my hand, but many were smaller."

"Will you guide me to this cave if I come to Ain Feshkha?" asked the Archbishop.

Dib looked at Sheik Abdullah. "Yes, Dib," the Sheik said, "we will stay near Ain Feshkha a few more weeks."

"Then," Archbishop Samuel said happily, "I shall come to the Wadi Qumran as soon as possible. Please keep watch for me as I do not know the area well."

It was the second week of August before Dib and Musa spied the Archbishop coming toward their camp astride a donkey.

"See," Musa cried, "he comes!" Then he frowned. "He is a foolish man to travel thus in this great heat. I see no water bag nor provisions

of any kind. Look, Dib, he has only three water-melons tied to his donkey!”

“He is a man of religion, Musa. Such men do not always know the ways of life in the desert.” Dib had a thoughtful expression on his face. “But,” he said, “they know many other more important things.”

“*Ahlan wasah’lan*. Welcome a hundred thousand times,” Dib called to the Archbishop.

“I give you greetings,” replied the Archbishop as he halted his donkey and slid to the ground, pulling his long black garment straight.

It was terribly hot and perspiration streamed down the Archbishop’s kindly face.

Dib and Musa led the Archbishop to the camp where they offered him cool water, and the Archbishop ate part of one of his melons. He was eager to get to the cave at once.

“I cannot tarry long,” he said. “Will you take me to the cave now, Muhammad Dib? I must return to Jerusalem shortly, for things grow troublesome and I must be at my place in the monastery.”

“*Aywah effendi*. Yes, sir,” said Dib. “We will go as soon as you are rested.”

“I have no time to rest. Let us go to the cave immediately.”

Dib and the Archbishop, with Musa, set out for the hills at once. It took them several hours to climb the rocky hills, and the blistering sunlight hurt the Archbishop's eyes. He frequently stopped to rest and to regain his breath. He was not a young man and the exertion tired him. But he was determined to see the cave.

"We are here! This is the place!" Dib called from ahead.

Archbishop Samuel was panting and puffing as he climbed the last boulders and stood beside Dib and Musa, looking at the black hole from which had come the scrolls. They rested awhile before going inside.

Tears came to the Archbishop's eyes as he looked around the gloomy cave. Now he was certain that a strange story lay behind this place which had contained his treasure. He picked up a few pieces of broken scrolls and placed them in his pocket, but he was too exhausted, too anxious to return to Jerusalem, to stay long. He had what he wanted, the exact location of the cave. Now he was ready to leave.

To Dib and Musa, Archbishop Samuel was like a person from another world, and all conversation was limited, therefore, to ordinary things. The

Archbishop could not share his thoughts with these Bedouin boys, neither of whom had ever seen a school.

“Thank you, Dib, and thank you too, boy,” he said to Musa. “I have seen enough. Now kindly help me down the mountain. I must leave at once.”

Dib and Musa watched the black-clad Archbishop ride off in the direction of Jerusalem.

“Perhaps, Musa, as you say, he is an impractical man. But he is a very strong and brave man, all the same,” Dib said. He jingled in his hands the coins the Archbishop had given them for their service to him. Throwing his hands in the air, Dib leaped about in circles, laughing with delight. “Now, Musa, we have the feast tomorrow before we move on!”

Next morning, despite the intense heat, vast preparations were going on at the Bedouin camp. The few women were busily preparing the food that would be eaten that night.

The men were spending the hours of daylight preparing games and racing their camels. Sheik Abdullah had a stake driven in the ground at one side of his tent, and another placed in the ground two hundred yards away, and several of the tribes-

men were matching their skill by racing back and forth between these marks, to the wild cheering and yelling of the other men.

Sheik Abdullah was pleased with Dib. Dib's awareness had brought the tribe what was a big profit to them, and they were to enjoy it.

"Come here, Dib, and you too, Musa," the Sheik called. "I think you would like to race camels with the men, is it not so?"

"*Aywah*. Yes," the boys said in unison, clapping each other on the back.

"Very well, the next turn shall be yours. But mind," he admonished, "be careful with the animals. They are very valuable to us."

Dib and Musa climbed onto the groaning, uncooperative camels, then touched them with their sticks to make them rise to their feet. Musa nearly fell off as the awkward animal he sat on rose clumsily from the ground, hind legs first, swaying sickeningly. At last the boys were at the starting stake.

"The first to race to the other end and back, twice, will have the choice piece of mutton tonight," Sheik Abdullah called. He held his small whip in the air, warned the boys to be ready, and then, with a loud crack of the whip, Dib and Musa urged their beasts toward the target. Slowly, the

clumsy-looking legs picked up speed as the camels found their stride.

Screaming with laughter, the boys raced each other up and down the course. Dib quickly drew ahead of Musa. On the last length he pulled well in front.

“*Nazar!* Look!” Dib cried as he finished the race with a flourish. Lifting his leg over the back of the camel, he hung with one hand touching the ground.

“Good boy, Dib.” Sheik Abdullah beamed as Dib led the camel back to him.

As darkness fell and the indigo sky slowly pushed the light away, a bright fire was lit at the center of the tents. The delicious smell of a sheep and a goat, roasting on a spit, drew the men around the fire. Two chickens were also on the spit and there was a pot of steaming soup. A huge dish of fluffy white rice spiced with bits of tomatoes and green peppers was placed in the center of a bright rug near the fire. The tribesmen sat around the rug, and the flickering firelight picked out the faces of the women and young children who hovered in the background. They would not be permitted to eat until the men had finished, as was the custom.

Carefully, the roasted meat was lifted over the tray of rice to let the dripping juices fall into the succulent dish. Using their fingers and small pieces of flat bread, the men dipped into the liquid to scoop a small heap of rice into their mouths. Sheik Abdullah took his dagger and cut for himself a choice piece of the mutton. He cut a second piece for Dib, then pulled apart a chicken and gave half of it to the boy. The other tribesmen then tore off the portions they most desired. Laughter and talk echoed around the rug and a sense of well-being filled the tribe.

When the men finished, they took out their pipes and moved to the fire. The women and children took over what was left of the food (which was plenty for all of them), and when they had finished, all the dishes were scraped clean and the bones tossed to the dogs.

When they had rested from eating, Dib took out the slender reed pipe he had made to keep himself company when he spent lonely hours minding the goats.

He began to play a thin, wailing Arabic melody. Another man took out a similar pipe, and another had a small hand drum. They took up the melody and rhythm of Dib's tune, and from the shadow of

a tent the tambourines of the women soon joined. One melody followed another, and suddenly the night air was pierced by the guttural singing of a woman. It was a sad love song, the kind so beloved to the Arabs, and though it was strange, it was sweet, and the haunting notes filled the air and drifted off into the vast silence of the desert.

Happy and peaceful, well content with his world, Muhammad Dib fell asleep by the fire.

Early the following day the Bedouins prepared to leave the place that had seen so much unusual excitement for them. Dib looked up at the hills and sighed. Now it is over, he thought. This important thing has ended.

But he was to learn, much later, that there would be more excitement and more unexpected wealth for his people.



CHAPTER FIVE *The Great Riddle*

DURING the remainder of that summer and fall, Archbishop Samuel studied the scrolls whenever he had an opportunity. He pored over them at night, laboriously trying to make sense of the strange writing, but he made little progress. He simply could not read Hebrew.

A number of visitors were constantly coming and going at the important Monastery of St. Mark, and Archbishop Samuel showed his scrolls to everyone who expressed interest.

“They are very ancient indeed,” said some.

Others said, “They *may* be ancient, but then again they may be worthless counterfeits. I think you paid too much for them.”

But the Archbishop was not upset. By now, old

and withered though they were, the scrolls seemed to have taken on an existence all their own. He was more than ever convinced that he was right about them. He studied the material carefully and the texture of the cloth in which the scrolls were wrapped. He felt sure that these scrolls were some of the oldest books in existence. Eventually, he decided to show them to someone who was an authority in ancient Hebrew, and he selected a man by the name of Stephan Hannah Stephan. This man was a very well known scholar who was working at that time for the Department of Antiquities of the government of Palestine, an office which concentrates on the history of the area and the old things found therein.

Dr. Stephan was quite willing to examine the scrolls, but after his examination he said, "I'm sorry, Archbishop Samuel. These are completely worthless!"

The Archbishop was at first bitterly disappointed. Taking the scrolls back to his library, he sat with them late into the night. He stared at them for a long time, unable to discount the feeling that was so strong within him that these *were* old, and valuable.

"Perhaps I was foolish," he murmured to him-

self. "Dr. Stephan is a fine man, an honest man, and a splendid scholar. Yet he is a specialist, like myself. I know Syriac and Syrian writings very well, but I know nothing of the Hebrew tongue. I should have considered that Dr. Stephan is a specialist in *Arabic* history."

After turning these things over in his mind, Archbishop Samuel grew more determined than ever. "I must find someone who knows *Jewish* history and the Hebrew tongue," he told himself. "I am certain that these *are* ancient documents and worthy of very careful study."

One day a Jewish doctor came to the monastery to get information about renting a building which belonged to the church.

As the Archbishop discussed the matter of rental with the doctor, he recalled that the scrolls were written in Hebrew. Perhaps this Jewish doctor could put him in touch with someone who could read them.

"I shall be most happy to," the doctor assured him. "Let me tell someone at the Hebrew University here in Jerusalem. I think they will be interested."

The doctor spoke to the president of the Hebrew University about the scrolls, and since, among the

many ancient things found in that part of the world, one never knows what will turn up that is of vital importance in the story of man, the president asked two of his librarians to go to the monastery and inspect the scrolls.

The Archbishop was very pleased to permit them to see the scrolls, and the two men were much impressed.

“But we are not really authorities on these ancient matters,” one of them said. “The man who should see these is away in America. But may we bring cameras and lights and take pictures of the scrolls anyway?”

The Archbishop agreed readily, and arrangements were made for the librarians to return. Once again Archbishop Samuel thought his belief in the scrolls might be proved sound. But once again the Archbishop was to be disappointed. When the appointed time came, the two librarians failed to appear.

It was most discouraging, and one day the Archbishop was telling this story and his belief in the antiquity of the scrolls to a French archaeologist who was one of the scholars at the French Dominican School of Archaeology in Jerusalem.

“I cannot be of much help to you,” the archaeologist said, “because I, too, am a specialist in *Arabic* history. But you are in great luck because there is a very learned gentleman who happens to be staying at the Dominican Monastery of St. Stephen. He is a famous scholar of the Bible, a Hollander, Father J. P. M. van der Ploeg. Shall I ask him to look at the scrolls?”

“By all means,” the Archbishop agreed. “If Father van der Ploeg would care to visit me, I would be most happy to get his opinion of the scrolls. I am still convinced they are very ancient.”

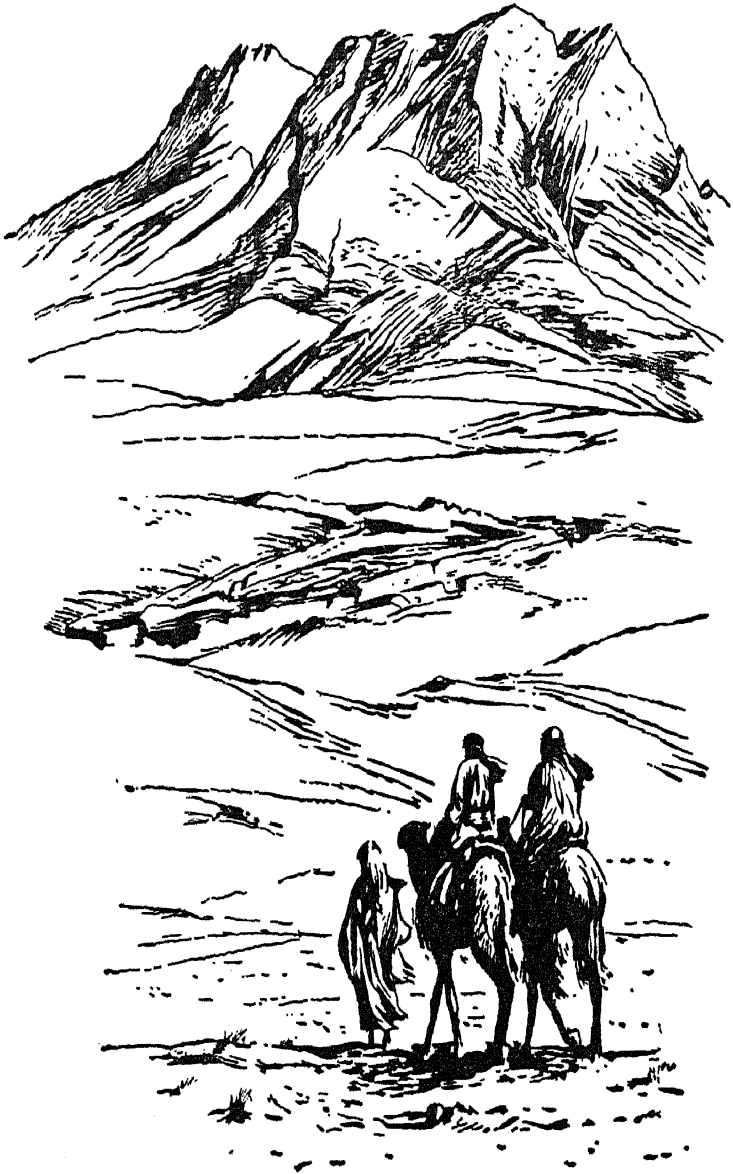
Archbishop Samuel received Father van der Ploeg in his library, and told the Dutch scholar the unusual story of the discovery of the scrolls.

“But there is nothing in that wilderness,” Father van der Ploeg exclaimed.

“Nothing but a few old ruins, a piece of wall here and there with an occasional broken stairway,” the Archbishop agreed.

“Has anyone explored out there recently?”

“No,” the Archbishop said. “There are many such ruins scattered throughout those hills and mountains. It is such a barren place it would take



There is nothing in that wilderness but a few old ruins

many lifetimes to examine them all. After all, they were merely isolated groups of dwellings where some people once lived.”

“Well,” Father van der Ploeg said, “let us see the scrolls.”

The Archbishop was excited. Here was the first man to see the scrolls whom he believed to be capable of judging honestly and fairly their real worth and importance. Would this man’s judgment uphold the Archbishop’s opinion and faith in his purchase? Or would it prove him wrong once and for all?

For a very long time Father van der Ploeg said nothing as he sat studying the old documents. Archbishop Samuel grew nervous but dared not interrupt the Father’s thoughts.

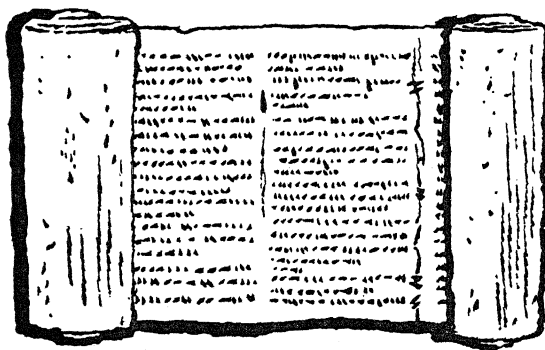
Were they real? Were they counterfeit?

The Dutch scholar sat at the desk, a scroll partially unrolled before him. His magnifying glass moved slowly across the unusual writing on the leather strips, and from time to time he would place his finger under the glass, scratching softly with a fingernail. Now and then he seemed to polish the material upon which the writing appeared, and he would lift a finger to his nostrils and inhale the dust collected there.

Finally, the Dutch scholar lowered his magnifying glass and looked up at the Archbishop. He placed his glass gently on the desk beside the unrolled scrolls. Slowly he pushed back his chair and stood beside Archbishop Samuel.

“Well?” the Archbishop asked.

Father van der Ploeg spoke almost reverently. “I don’t know by what trick of fate I have been privileged to look upon such a wonderful discovery. I am convinced,” he announced solemnly, a glow coming into his eyes, “that we are looking at the earliest existing book of Isaiah!”



CHAPTER SIX *Another Piece of the
Puzzle*

AFTER he left the Sheik with Dib and Musa at the gates of the monastery, their fellow tribesman took his scrolls to another part of Jerusalem.

He hurried to the shop of a merchant who often purchased goods from the Bedouins and who was said to be interested in old things. If anyone could sell the scrolls for him, this merchant could.

The tribesman was right. Accustomed to the ways of the Bedouins, which are not the ways of city dwellers, and knowing that antiquities of all kinds were always of some value, the merchant gave the Bedouin tribesman a small sum of money in advance and took charge of the scrolls.

The tribesman then told him the story of the cave and how the scrolls had been found. It is

possible he did not say that it was Muhammad Dib who had found the cave first, for the merchant was an intelligent man, and if he had known that other Bedouins had found scrolls, he would surely have investigated. However, this did not happen, and he believed that the scrolls he had been offered were the only ones.

Since he felt sure that the writing on the scrolls was Hebrew, he reasoned that a Jewish scholar would be the most likely person to buy them.

“There is a famous Jewish school here in Jerusalem,” he told the tribesman, “which is called the Hebrew University. I think it would be wisest to offer these old books there. Do you agree?”

“*Ana máhlîsh.* I do not care,” the Bedouin said. “If they have a value, sell them. I wish to buy a camel so that I need not the permission of the Sheik when I want to return to Jerusalem.”

“*Tî-yîb.* Good,” replied the merchant. “Then I shall take these to this Hebrew school. But let us talk further before you leave. You tell me there are still more jars, more scrolls and pieces of scrolls in that cave?”

“*Ay-wah.* Yes,” the tribesman said, remembering the many broken pieces scattered about, the pieces which the boys Dib and Musa had wanted

to take. Mentally he congratulated himself because he had told the boys they were worthless. Now they might bring profit to him.

“When you return to your people, will you visit that cave again and bring me more objects?” the merchant asked.

“*Inshal’la*. If it is God’s will,” the Bedouin replied. “I will go to the cave and will bring more things when I return to Jerusalem.”

The merchant waited many weeks, but the Bedouin did not return quickly. Finally, in the fall, the merchant made an appointment to present the scrolls at the Hebrew University.

Earlier in the summer, when the Jewish doctor had visited him to rent a building from the monastery, Archbishop Samuel had asked the doctor to contact someone at the Hebrew University for him. Dr. E. L. Sukenik, a world-famous scholar and head of the Department of Archaeology at the university, would have been the logical choice, but he was in America. In the meantime, bitter fighting had begun to break out in the city. When the two librarians failed to keep their appointment at the monastery, everyone at the university forgot about the Archbishop and his scrolls.

This time, it was to Dr. Sukenik himself, re-

cently returned from America, that the merchant presented the tribesman's scrolls.

We are very fortunate to have Dr. Sukenik's diary to tell us of the merchant's visit and of the excitement the doctor felt when he saw what the man had brought. He wrote:

November 25, 1947: Today I met an antiquity dealer. A Hebrew book has been discovered in a jar. I saw a fragment written on parchment. *Genizah?*

A *Genizah* is a room in a Jewish church (synagogue) where all old and discarded books are stored. All books and manuscripts of the Jewish church are sacred, even the bindings in which they are wrapped, and are never destroyed. The *Genizah* is the room in which these old books are stored forever.

November 27, 1947: At the dealer's, I saw four pieces of leather, with Hebrew writing. The script seems very ancient to me, very much like the writing on the Uzziah inscription. [A very old and authenticated script.] Is it possible? The man says there are also jars! I looked at a bit and found good Biblical Hebrew, a text unknown to me. The man says a Bedouin of the Ta-amirah tribe brought it to him.

November 27, 1947, was an important day in history as well as for Dr. Sukenik personally. It



Bitter fighting had begun

was on this day that the General Assembly of the United Nations passed the famous resolution which created the new land of Israel within the old country that had been called Palestine. For the first time in centuries, Jews had an independent country of their own.

The creation of this new nation was, of course, welcomed joyously by Jews all over the world, but the Arabs bitterly resented it. They had come to that area of the world long after the Jews had been dispersed, except for a few who remained in Jerusalem and odd corners of the country. The Turks had held the land for many years until the British, under General Allenby, drove them out in 1917. This had been accomplished with the help of the Arabs under the guidance of Lawrence of Arabia. The Arabs, therefore, felt that the last people with any claim on the land were the Jews. It was of no consequence to them that the Jewish claim antedated their own by centuries.

It was a great problem for everyone, and although it was hastily considered that this decision by the United Nations had finally settled the issue once and for all, such was not the case. The fighting had grown more bitter and intense and only the limited supplies of weapons prevented more

loss of life and destruction than had actually occurred. Jerusalem was divided, part held by Jews and part by Arabs, and life in the city was hazardous and dangerous.

But Dr. Sukenik was mostly excited about the scrolls. He had just purchased the three scrolls from the merchant as well as other bits of scrolls and pottery that the tribesman had later found.

Dr. Sukenik, like the Archbishop, turned the scrolls over and over in his hands, and with each study his excitement grew.

One day he was showing his recently purchased scrolls to some librarians of the university.

“These may prove to be one of the greatest discoveries of all time,” he said with great enthusiasm. “They must be studied carefully for what it is they have to tell us.”

One of the librarians looked closely at the scrolls, then shrugged his shoulders casually. “I know of others like these.”

Dr. Sukenik was astounded. “Where?” he cried.

The librarian told him about their earlier visit to the Archbishop, which had been forgotten, and how the Archbishop had given permission to them to photograph his scrolls, although this had not been done. The bitterness of the fighting had

made it necessary for them to avoid Arab-held ground as much as possible. Indeed, few left their homes without good reason to do so.

Dr. Sukenik was very upset. "They are undoubtedly parts of the same books, and we *must* have them all together before we can make a proper study of them."

Dr. Sukenik was a man of great courage. Despite the very dangerous circumstances in the city, he determined to find the other scrolls. This was the first he had heard that the scrolls in his possession were not the only ones that had been found.

Imagine Dr. Sukenik's excitement, therefore, when he received a letter from a Mr. Anton Kiraz, a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church of which Samuel was Archbishop. The letter told Dr. Sukenik of the scrolls in the Archbishop's possession and invited Dr. Sukenik to see them. Mr. Kiraz, evidently, had also decided that the Hebrew University was the wise place for the study of the scrolls.

Because of the danger of traveling in the city, it was decided that they should meet on neutral territory, and a meeting was arranged at the central point for both sides, the YMCA in Jerusalem. So far, this building had been left alone and, by and

large, Christians had not been drawn into hostilities. Each party would have to make its own arrangements for safe passage to the YMCA.

When Dr. Sukenik arrived at the YMCA and saw the scrolls Mr. Kiraz showed him, he became very excited. "These are parts of the scrolls I have!" he exclaimed. "Do these belong to the Archbishop?"

"They do," announced Mr. Kiraz, "and I believe we can arrange for you to purchase them."

Dr. Sukenik was delighted. "Excellent. When? How? At what price?"

Mr. Kiraz laughed. "We will have to meet again first," he said, "and with the president of your university and Archbishop Samuel. Then we can make final arrangements."

Dr. Sukenik was also a bold man, and though he was fearful of being refused, he asked anyway. "May I borrow these scrolls for a few days? I shall take excellent care of them, of course, and will—"

"You may have them for inspection for two days only," Mr. Kiraz interrupted. "Then I must return them to the library at the monastery."

It was agreed, and Dr. Sukenik borrowed the scrolls and was able to copy just enough from them

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

Jerusalem ●
Bethlehem ●

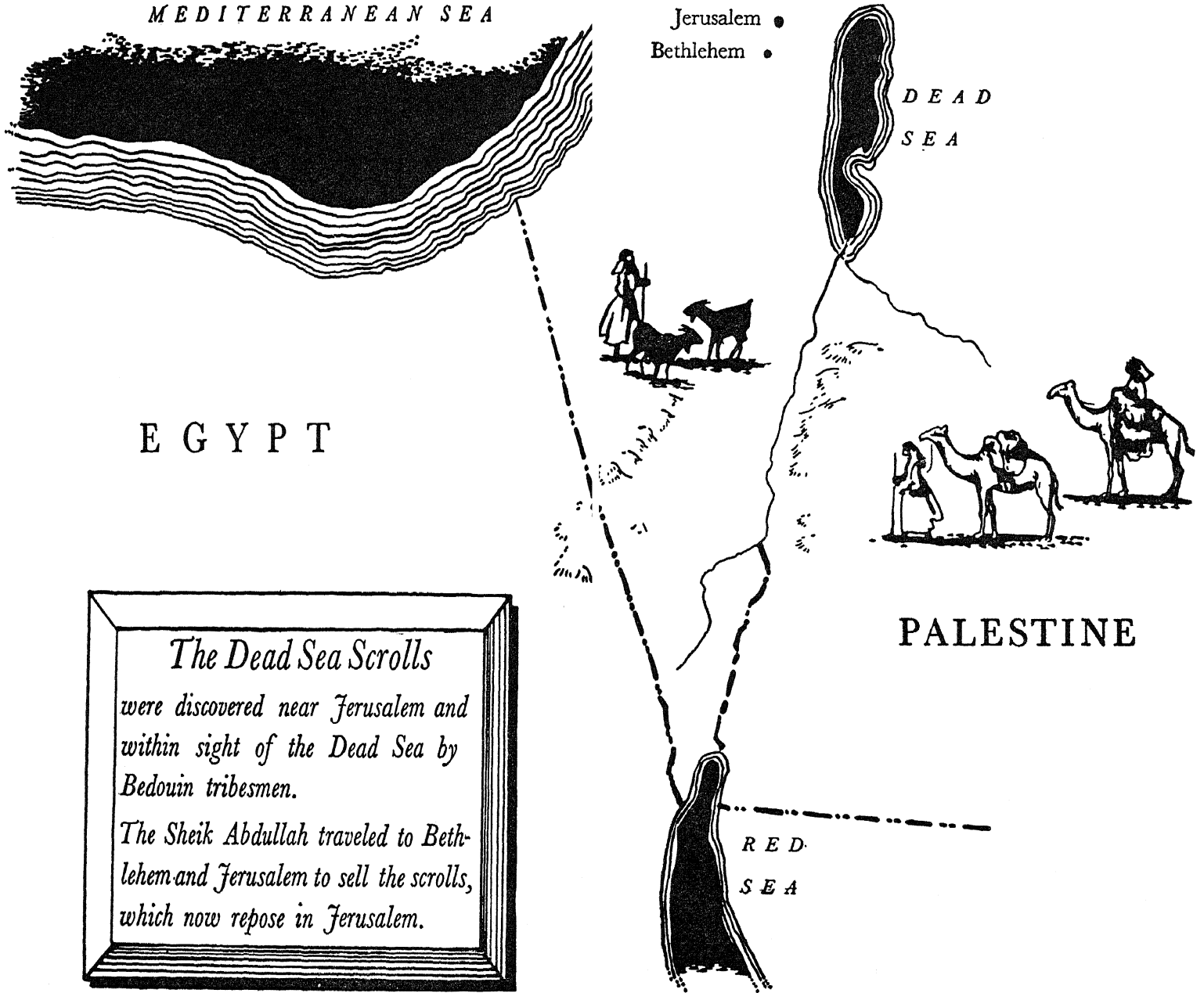
DEAD
SEA

E G Y P T

PALESTINE

The Dead Sea Scrolls
were discovered near Jerusalem and
within sight of the Dead Sea by
Bedouin tribesmen.
The Sheik Abdullah traveled to Beth-
lehem and Jerusalem to sell the scrolls,
which now repose in Jerusalem.

RED
SEA



to prove what he had suspected, that they were portions of the scrolls already in his possession. But he returned the scrolls as promised to Mr. Kiraz on February 6, 1948, at which time Mr. Kiraz showed him two more scrolls from the five that the Archbishop possessed. They arranged a meeting at which time the scrolls would be purchased.

That meeting never took place. By now the disturbances had developed into what could only properly be called open warfare, and Jerusalem was like a city besieged. Archbishop Samuel, as we shall see, was involved in other matters, and so it was many years before the scrolls came together again.

By this time the fabulous scrolls seemed almost to have acquired a personality, a life and breath of their own. Actually, they were silent, dead and decaying ancient bits of leather and parchment with black scratchings on one side. But slowly news of them spread, and slowly men of learning all over the world learned of their existence and their probable importance and the truths they might eventually tell us.

The excitement over them grew rapidly.

CHAPTER SEVEN *The Treasures*
Vanish

IT WAS at this point that American scholars came onto the scene and became involved in the controversy that grew up around the discovery of the scrolls. What had begun with a straying goat had now become a matter of serious consideration by two totally unrelated schools of thought and activity.

Dr. Sukenik knew of the Archbishop's scrolls and hoped to buy them. In fact, he was negotiating for their purchase with Mr. Kiraz.

But, strangely enough, Archbishop Samuel did not know that Mr. Kiraz was offering the scrolls for sale. Perhaps Mr. Kiraz was thinking he could use his initiative and gain the praise of the Archbishop by being able to present him with good

terms for the scrolls. In the meantime, the Archbishop himself was making still more inquiries and arrangements.

Ever since Father van der Ploeg's reaction to the scrolls, the Archbishop had felt that what he had suspected from the first was an established fact. His scrolls were very important discoveries and very valuable indeed. He searched among the many scholars still in Jerusalem for someone to make further studies and possibly translate what was written on the scrolls.

A monk at the monastery suggested that additional comments and judgments concerning the value and age of the scrolls might be obtained from the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem.

The Archbishop beamed. "It is an excellent suggestion," he agreed, and he telephoned at once.

Fate again seemed to add to the difficulties, and many of the people who might have been interested and useful guides happened to be away, studying in the field or on vacations. But one alert young scholar, Dr. John Trever, the acting director of the school, was present when the Archbishop called. It was fortunate that he was, for it was largely through his efforts that the scrolls were brought to the attention of the entire world.

It was arranged that at 2:30 the following day the scrolls would be brought to the school. This day was Thursday, February 19, 1948, and two monks from the monastery—Brother Butros Sowmy and his brother Ibrahim—presented the scrolls to Dr. Trever.

While Dr. Trever was studying the scrolls the two brothers told him the oft-repeated story of Muhammad Dib's discovery, as they had been instructed by the Archbishop.

“But if that is true . . .”

Dr. Trever didn't finish the sentence. He had been copying a few lines from the scrolls and was comparing them with something else. He looked up at the two men gravely. “Can you take me to the Archbishop?”

The brothers were skeptical. “It is dangerous,” Butros said. “The fighting becomes more violent daily. Nobody is safe on the streets now.”

“You should not venture to the monastery,” said Ibrahim.

“But I *must* see the other scrolls. I must!” insisted Dr. Trever. “If what I have checked is true, this is one of the greatest discoveries of all time!”

Dr. Trever had compared the scroll with pictures of the writing of the famous Nash Papyrus, a document in a library in England which had

been proved to be the oldest Hebrew manuscript in existence. Yet the Archbishop's scroll appeared to be older! Little wonder that Dr. Trever was so excited.

Despite the dangers involved, Dr. Trever made a trip to the monastery, and the Archbishop happily showed him the rest of the scrolls.

"May I please photograph these and send the pictures to America for study?" Dr. Trever begged the Archbishop. "I honestly believe this is the most incredible discovery yet made and it belongs to the whole world!"

Archbishop Samuel, elated to find someone else who believed in the scrolls, willingly agreed. But still more difficulties lay ahead.

Because of the war, electricity was cut, and frequently they had only the weakest of light even when the lights were working. The result was that when the time came to take the pictures, it was a long and tedious task. The scrolls were broken and torn in places, and white ants had eaten parts of them along the edges. The professors had to piece them together with clear tape, like a jigsaw, before they could get any pictures.

Sometimes the lights would go out in the middle of a carefully arranged shot and they would be

forced to wait until the current returned to complete the picture.

Finally, they managed to get enough for their purpose, and when these were prepared, Dr. Trever sent prints of the scrolls to a famous scholar in America, Dr. W. F. Albright of Johns Hopkins University, one of the greatest living Biblical archaeologists.

Dr. Trever was delighted, and Archbishop Samuel had tears in his eyes when, on March 15, 1948, they received the reply from Dr. Albright. These were his words:

My heartiest congratulations on the greatest manuscript discovery of modern times! There is no doubt in my mind that the script is older than that of the Nash Papyrus . . . I should think a date around 100 B.C. . . . What an absolutely incredible find! And there can happily not be the slightest doubt in the world about the genuineness of the manuscript.

For the Archbishop, it was the end of a long story of hopes and bitter frustrations, and of having to maintain faith where others did not believe.

For Dr. Trever, it was fame, even a spot in history, and the beginning of long years of careful, detailed study and astounding new knowledge.

And for the world, it was the beginning of a study that is still going on, that even with the best modern equipment may take fifty years to complete. The clear truth is still to be established about some of the scrolls that were found and the people that hid them in the cave.

But for others?

Here the story takes a new road. Full-scale fighting was now going on and Dr. Trever was deeply concerned that the priceless treasures might be damaged or destroyed in the bombing, or lost by some freak accident.

One day a taxi and a bodyguard arrived at the school for Dr. Trever.

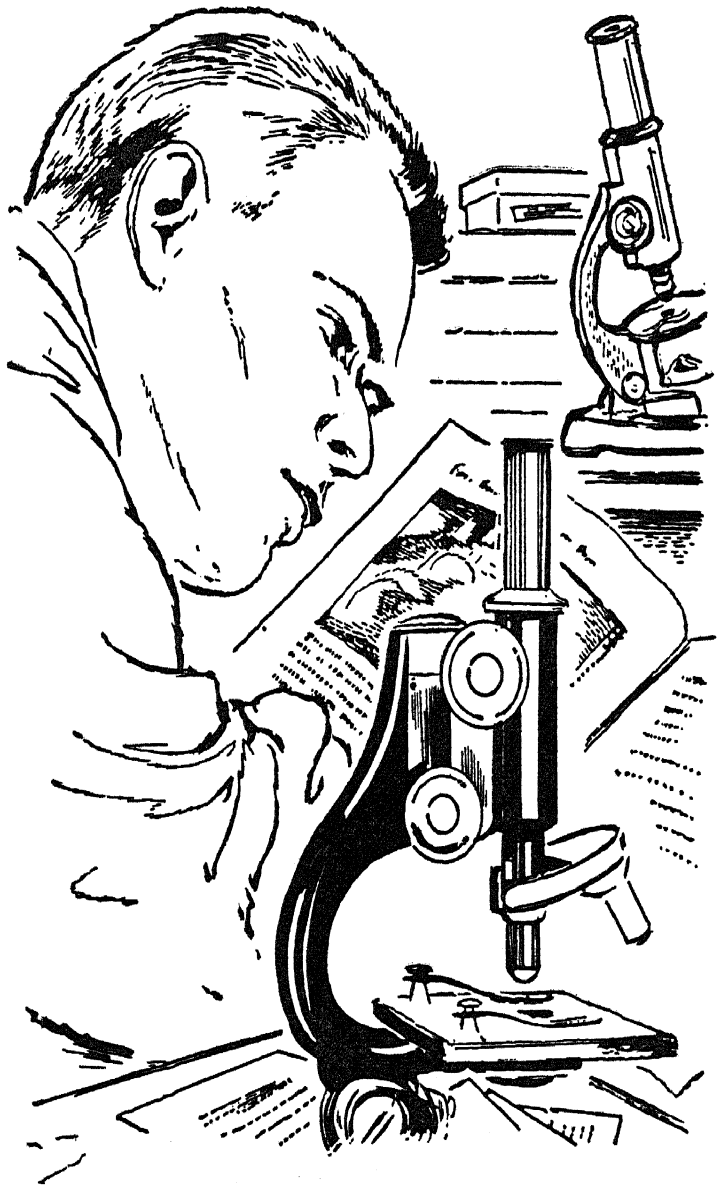
“What is it?” Dr. Trever wanted to know.

“The Archbishop sends for you. He wishes you to come to the Monastery of St. Mark at once, and I am sent to protect you,” the bodyguard told him.

Worried and anxious, Dr. Trever climbed into the rickety taxi and was whisked through the dangerous streets of Jerusalem. They passed quickly through the gates of the monastery, and Dr. Trever was hurriedly led to the Archbishop’s study.

“Is something wrong?” the doctor asked immediately.

“It is not that,” the Archbishop said calmly.



It was the beginning of a study which is still going on

“I only wish to tell you something of great importance.”

“Yes?” Dr. Trever said impatiently, mystified by the Archbishop’s attitude. “Are there more of the scrolls, has something new turned up?”

The Archbishop shook his head.

Dr. Trever grew despondent. He was used to the strange behavior of people in the Middle East. The United Nations Mandate had ended and now Israel was alone, its own master, and much of the land of old Palestine had gone to Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. It had solved nothing. The fighting was still intense. Fires had already been caused at the monastery by stray shells and there had been loss of life. Now even Christians had no special protection although they were not on one side or the other.

Were the scrolls in danger?

“What is it?” Dr. Trever finally demanded.

The Archbishop spoke slowly as he said, “I wish to tell you that the scrolls are no longer here. They have disappeared!”

CHAPTER EIGHT *The World Gets
the News*

NO ONE knows to this day, except Archbishop Samuel, exactly where the scrolls were during those dark war days of the summer and fall of 1948.

But in January, 1949, Archbishop Samuel stepped ashore in the United States of America, having traveled halfway around the world. Apparently, he had done on his own accord what he had been urged to do by the American School in Jerusalem—and he now carried the famous scrolls with him. The scrolls were safe!

He went to Yale University, where arrangements had been made to publish the translated texts of the scrolls. It seems likely that the Archbishop was concerned with doing the best he could for the scrolls, for his church had suffered in the fighting.

Perhaps when the texts were published, he could get a big price for the scrolls. His church badly needed funds.

While all the studies by Dr. Trever had been going on, and while the scrolls of the Archbishop had seemed mysteriously to vanish, Dr. Sukenik had been busily engaged in unrolling and studying what was written on the scrolls in his possession. He read them carefully, checking every word and every line and mark on the ancient books. He noted that some Hebrew characters seemed to have changed slightly in style. His was a most difficult task. The old leather was very dry and brittle, and pieces of it frequently broke and had to be laid under glass for protection. Some of the scrolls seemed to be only pieces of longer documents.

“If only I could have purchased those other scrolls,” Dr. Sukenik said frequently as he bent to his work. “This is only one part; we need all the parts before we can read from beginning to end and know exactly what we have.”

Dr. Sukenik kept in constant touch with the merchant from whom he had originally bought the scrolls. He had written in his diary a day-by-day account of his earliest discovery of the scrolls:

December 1, 1947: The merchant says we shan't see one another in the near future because of the Arab strike proclaimed for the next three days.

I read a little more in the "parchments." I'm afraid of going too far in thinking about them. It may be that this is one of the greatest finds ever made, a find we never so much as hoped for.

December 5, 1947: More killings: The strike is over but not the violence. The scrolls leave me no peace. I'm bursting to know what will come of it. It might turn out that the neighborhood [where they were found] has many things of this sort. Who knows what surprises await us?

December 6, 1947: Night. I sit and think and think about the scrolls. When will I see more of them? Patience, patience.

December 21, 1947: Days of awe. I contacted the merchant. We're to meet tomorrow at noon near the gate. . . . I went. I bought another scroll in very bad condition.

January 13, 1948: I went to the main Post Office [near the new border]. The merchant came. He promised to get in touch with Bethlehem. I said the *Hagomel* blessing when I left [a blessing said in relief at escaping mortal danger].

At last the time had come for an announcement. But whereas the world heard of the Archbishop's scrolls when they had been photographed and prints sent to America, Dr. Sukenik was more

familiar with the ways of modern life. The world heard about his scrolls in a different way.

Since he believed from the very beginning that these documents were the most important discovery of their kind ever made, Dr. Sukenik lost no time in setting up a press conference when he had some proof assembled.

In early January, 1948, Dr. Sukenik sent word to all the press correspondents in Jerusalem that he had an announcement of the utmost importance to make to the world.

“*He* has something important to say?” one of the reporters said to a friend. “What does he think the war is, a game of tag?”

“We’d better go,” his friend replied. “Dr. Sukenik is a fine man and he wouldn’t call a conference like this if he didn’t think it was something really big.”

“But it’s called at the Jewish Agency, near the middle of the New City of Jerusalem! There’s a war going on! We could all be killed at that place!”

“It’s our job to get the news and report it. If it’s a little dangerous now and then, well . . .”

Shells were dropping all around as they scuttled like rabbits to the Jewish Agency building. They ducked in and out of sheltering doorways, dodging

madly from place to place as they made their way.

"This had better be good!" an American reporter muttered through clenched teeth. "I'm risking my life to get this story."

Shells burst and flashed as Dr. Sukenik walked proudly into the room where the reporters were gathered. Murmurs rose from the group as they noticed what he was carrying in his arms.

Dramatically, Dr. Sukenik placed the scroll on the table at the front of the room, then slowly unrolled a small section of it.

"Gentlemen," he said slowly, "you are looking at the oldest and most valuable Hebrew document in the entire world."

The correspondents were silent. Dr. Sukenik's awe and excitement had touched them all. He went on, "This manuscript was written, in my opinion, in the first or second century before the birth of Christ!"

A gasp went up in the room. Everyone began to scribble hurriedly and take notes. The doctor went on to tell the story of the discovery, and they heard talk about an original book of Isaiah, and another work, not clearly understood as yet. Dr. Sukenik called it *The War of the Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*.

At the very moment Dr. Sukenik mentioned the

title of this scroll, a large shell burst nearby and shook the building.

In the reporters' stories of that meeting, nearly all of them spoke enthusiastically about Dr. Sukenik's courage in presenting this great story under such a handicap, and they praised his unselfishness and eagerness to tell the world the news despite the terrible situation in Jerusalem at that time.

Dr. Sukenik wanted to go immediately to the cave, and he tried several times to organize parties of exploration to search the region. But it proved impossible. It was too dangerous, and nothing more was discovered until the war in that area ended.

Both Dr. Sukenik and the scholars who had photographs of the Archbishop's scrolls could only translate and study the material they had, waiting anxiously for the time when they could go to the site of the discovery and get at the truth of the scrolls' origins.

The scrolls, in a sense, now belonged to the world—although Archbishop Samuel and Dr. Sukenik retained actual ownership—and events

of the war changed the direction of study when exploration once more became possible.

The truce that was signed under the United Nations put an official end to the war and drew up new frontiers for the separated countries of Israel, Transjordan (which now decided to drop the prefix "trans" from its name), and Egypt. The area which included the Wadi Qumran became part of Jordan. The cave, therefore, and everything else in that area, became the special task of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, of which Mr. G. Lankester Harding was the head. Père Roland de Vaux, a brilliant Biblical scholar of the French institution, the École Biblique, worked closely with Mr. Harding, and under the expert direction of these men a month's expedition was arranged as soon as the official end of the war was proclaimed. They were able to make this preliminary exploration in February, 1949.

They found, on this excursion, many smaller pieces of scrolls, and a great deal of broken pottery. They found pieces of a Roman cooking pot, a Roman lamp, and many interesting ancient objects, all pointing to the fact that this site was very old and had been occupied in ancient times. This search was largely confined to the cave that had

been found by Muhammad Dib when he was looking for his goat.

Mr. Harding and Father de Vaux retained their finds for further study, but the news of their interest was not long in reaching members of the Tamirah tribe of Bedouins. The success of Dib and Musa in selling their find for a good price had been the subject of frequent discussions around the tribe's fires. Many times they had passed through Wadi Qumran, but the increasing violence in Palestine forced them to avoid the place as much as possible, and they did not venture into the settled areas more often than necessary.

Still, Dib, who was growing rapidly and now wore a big black mustache, had not lost his interest in the caves. When they became aware of the interest of Mr. Harding and Father de Vaux, a buzz of excitement swept through the tribe. Being more of a man now, Dib spoke more boldly to Sheik Abdullah. He also wanted to have a camel of his own so that he might gain stature and respect within the tribe.

He discussed the situation with his friend Musa, and they approached Sheik Abdullah.

At first the Sheik, who was less active than he had been, was merely irritated. "We had enough

troubles with the first scrolls," he said. "Besides, we have more important things to consider."

But the boys insisted that men were working around the cave and that more treasures were to be found. That meant more money and more comfort for the tribe.

"We will pass by that way," Sheik Abdullah finally agreed. "But I do not like my men digging in those hills. It is not good to labor thus."

"But if we find more scrolls and sell them, would we not make more and make it more quickly than with our animals and goods?" Dib asked. "And we still have our things to sell in Bethlehem." Younger boys now tended the goats, and Dib and Musa had more freedom.

Sheik Abdullah looked at the young men. "It is well to try for these unexpected riches," he said, "but one cannot be sure of finding them."

When they reached Wadi Qumran, Sheik Abdullah became more interested when he saw the work of Mr. Harding and Father de Vaux. He watched them, but said nothing until that night when the campfires were lit. He called all the tribesmen to hear his decision.

"We have this day watched the *aġanibi* digging around the cave where Muhammad Dib found the

scrolls," he announced. "They are paying money for scrolls and antiquities, so the scrolls Dib found must be very important to them." He paused. "We shall bide here several days. It is better to let the palm tree stand and collect its dates than it is to cut the tree down in order to reach the fruit. Therefore, when these men leave, we shall take an extra day or two and search the mountains for more of these treasures." It was a long speech for the Sheik, and everyone agreed to his plan.

Thus it was that after Mr. Harding and Father de Vaux left the site, the Bedouins swarmed over the area and, in their frantic search, destroyed much evidence and made the work of the scholars much more difficult. It was suggested, later, that they had even cut some of the scrolls into pieces in order to have more to sell. Such is the simple reasoning of the Bedouins, and these treasures meant only unexpected gain to them.

The situation grew so serious and the destruction so widespread that Mr. Harding despaired after his next trip to the site.

On January 21, 1951, Mr. Harding and Father de Vaux took action against this wanton marauding. They took two soldiers from the Arab Legion and, with the Chief of Police, went to the caves to



The Bedouins swarmed over the area

hinder the Bedouins from ransacking the area.

But Mr. Harding was a wise man who understood the Bedouins and their hard way of life. He made it a point to employ several of the tribesmen to help with the digging under proper supervision, and the rest were ordered to move on. They were warned of penalties if they were caught in further activity near the precious site.

We do not know whether Muhammad Dib was one of those employed in this work. But it is very certain that he still wanders the desert wastelands with his tribe and their goats, visiting the patches of melon vines and following the scant pasture. Perhaps he still talks of his adventure in the cave and rides the camel he earned from it. But for us, he now passes from our story. Perhaps "if it is Allah's will," as Muhammad Dib would say, readers in many other lands will hear his name and he will have made a tiny place in history. For no story of the wonderful discovery can be complete without Dib and his goats.

From this point on, many men came to the site of the caves, and under the direction of Mr. Harding and Father de Vaux, many new and astounding discoveries were made that helped fill in the

picture and solve the puzzle. Slowly, piece by piece, the story is being put together.

There is much disagreement among scholars as to what the final truth and significance of these discoveries will be, but this kind of disagreement is natural in the search for truth.

Perhaps one of the greatest truths is this: that our Bible, as we know it, shows very little difference from these original ancient books of the Bible that were discovered by Muhammad Dib. This fact, which has been widely substantiated, is a wonderful tribute to the honesty and skill of scholars who, through the centuries to our own times, made the various translations that we have come to know so well and accept as truth.

It is not the book of Isaiah which was recorded on one scroll which now causes the discord and controversy. It is those scrolls which have no counterpart in the Bible. These stories and books of which we had never heard before are the cause of the discussions and arguments which now rage in the world of scholars and students.



CHAPTER NINE *The Caves Tell a
Story*

FATHER de Vaux was elated. Now he could organize the exploration of the caves and the old wall sticking out of the sand nearby. The puzzle was intriguing. Why were there so many caves? Who left the scrolls in them? Why? And what was the ruin? Was it a house? Was it a large building, a small building? Was it a fort? With work, the puzzle might shortly be solved.

Within a few weeks, crews of Bedouin workmen and a few overseers were swarming over the hills under the direction of Mr. Lankester Harding and Father de Vaux. Cave after cave was discovered, some two hundred and seventy altogether. Carefully, they were numbered and marked for explora-

tion; each article found in the caves was accurately catalogued to ensure a complete picture.

With the help of men well trained in digging, and the many willing hands of the Bedouin laborers, the task of examining the caves moved forward swiftly. Some of the cave entrances were obscured by piles of sand and stones, perhaps dislodged during the earthquake that once shook the site.

Father de Vaux was everywhere, supervising the work. His brown eyes sparkled behind thick-lensed glasses. His enthusiasm was contagious. Nothing escaped his attention. He scrambled about the ruins and caves like a mountain goat, and he was easy to pick out from the rest of the toilers because of his shining white robes. Sometimes, when the sun was too hot, he would pull his hood over his head in order to keep working.

As soon as the caves were examined and all the findings listed properly, and when the studies of the caves' details were under way, Father de Vaux turned his attention to the Khirbet ("ruin") Qumran, as it was called by the Bedouins.

This ruin was nothing more than a bit of wall made of rough gray stone when Father de Vaux first saw it. It had been known for centuries, but no one seems to have paid any attention to the fact

that the Roman historian Josephus, himself a Jew, had pinpointed this precise spot as the headquarters of a sect of the Jewish faith known as Esenes. Had it been ignored, perhaps, because it looked so different from the description given by Josephus? Certainly none of the palm trees he described were to be found. They had vanished long ago. But whatever the reason, the ruin had long been dismissed as mere remains of a Roman fort and of no importance.

Father de Vaux laid his plans carefully. Great sections were marked out, beginning at the wall, and then the archaeologist called his workmen together and gave them careful instructions. They were to dig, slowly and carefully, removing the sand and dirt and stones in baskets. Each basket was to be inspected with the utmost care before the contents were dumped. Each object found in the rubbish was to be marked with the number of the square in which it was found and its position within that square.

As the ground level lowered in one square and walls began to emerge, work could then be started in the adjoining square, and thus the plan progressed until, to the delighted amazement of even the Bedouins, a form began to show itself. A wall

here was joined by another, and another, still another—until two or three rooms were evident. And still the ground was being dug away from the walls, and still more rooms emerged.

The work took tedious months, but Father de Vaux was always present, always ready to help with the actual digging and always delighted when a bit of pottery or a piece of something strange or unusual turned up.

At last, the truth of the “bit of a wall” became evident: this place had once been the site of a vast and complex building. There were many walls and many rooms which had long been buried under shifting sands and forgotten.

Father de Vaux was always eager to show visitors the progress he was making. He would skip about the various rooms of the monastery, some thirty or more of them, and call attention to various details. “See,” he would say, “this appears to have been the main room of the group.” This rectangular room was built of large blocks of stone, joined together with mortar. As the laborers carefully brushed and scraped the rubbish and dirt from the wall, one could see it had once been covered with plaster. When the Bedouin workers, watched closely by Father de Vaux, slowly and

gently brushed the remaining dirt from the floors, pebblestone paving was uncovered. Under the skill and enthusiasm of Father de Vaux, it was easy to picture how this large group of buildings had looked when they were occupied.

Mixed with the dirt that was so carefully sifted before being discarded, traces of burnt ash were found. This indicated, after careful study, that the roofs had once been thatched with rushes from the Dead Sea and had burned when the buildings were attacked. According to the descriptions of the historian Josephus, the roofs were held up on logs made of palm trunks.

In one corner of the site there was a two-story tower, evidently used as a lookout or perhaps for defense. Layer after layer of rubble was carefully removed by hand from this tower.

Another very large room, this one about seventy feet in length, appeared to have a kind of platform or dais at one end, and judging by its size, it seems to have been a central gathering place for the Essenes who occupied the buildings. Perhaps it was their place of worship.

Another astonishing sight emerged into the light of day under the guidance of Father de Vaux. This was a room which contained long tables and benches built of brick and plaster.

When part of the first bench emerged from the rubble of the centuries, Father de Vaux had an idea of what to expect. He was present the whole time, as slowly, bit by bit, the dirt was dug away from the tables and benches. In the process of sifting the dirt, three inkwells were found. One was bronze and two were terra cotta. The two terra-cotta inkwells contained traces of dried ink. When all the places were cleared and the tables and benches were seen in the places where they had been built and used, it became obvious to Father de Vaux that this was the room wherein the scrolls had been copied and written before they were hidden in the caves.

As more rubbish was sifted, quantities of pottery came to light. In fact, so much of it was in one room, along with what seems to have been the remains of a potter's wheel, it can be surmised that this group was so self-sufficient that they even made their own utensils.

Also uncovered in the baskets of dirt taken from the floors were knives, hoes, scythes, nails, and locks and keys. A mill for grinding grain was also found.

Now many of the pieces of the puzzle began to fall into place; the picture began to clear.

Some of the jars found were exactly like those

in which Muhammad Dib had discovered the first scrolls. Earthen lamps were also uncovered. These items, and the fact that scythes and hoes would only be required by a group of people who cultivated the earth, established the fact that, at one time, when the buildings held a flourishing colony of the sect of the Essenes, more water had been available than was now indicated.

It was not surprising, therefore, when an enormous water-supply system was unearthed. The people living there had taken great pains to store water for the periods of drought, and six large cisterns were found, with steps leading down into them. Rain was caught in troughs on the hills and directed into these huge storage places. Seven smaller cisterns were also discovered, but these were closer to surface level and may have held water for holy ceremonies. Seven, as we know, is an important number in Jewish ritual.

Almost four hundred coins were found scattered about the ruins. No coins were found in the caves. This again clarifies what Josephus had written of this place. He wrote that the people living here had an overseer who kept charge of the community funds. The money was always kept in one place.

Several other exciting facts were tied in with these coins and proved Josephus more accurate than some scholars had supposed. The finding of the coins went a long way toward fitting together the bits of the puzzle. The coins ranged in date from Antiochus III in 136 B.C. through several succeeding rulers and ended abruptly about A.D. 68. It seems, therefore, that within this period of years these buildings were occupied constantly. However, there was a gap in the dating of these coins. None were found that covered the years 37 to 4 B.C.!

The probable answer tells us a great deal of the wonders of historic restoration and excavation, and the brilliance of the patient men who study ruins and ancient dwellings.

Cracks in a stairway indicate that some catastrophe took place which made the buildings dangerous for occupation. Part of the wall of one room had been propped up. There had been large cracks in the base of the two-story tower, and from the way it had been repaired with smaller stones, it too must have been in danger of collapse. Obviously, "something" had happened.

Again, from Josephus, we know that an earth-

quake occurred in that region at precisely the time covered by the break in the date sequence of the coins. This earthquake occurred in 31 B.C. There is proof that debris had been cleared from the buildings hundreds of years ago, and the piles of rubbish cleared at that time are still to be seen today. Thus it became clear that the occupants of this site had been forced to abandon the buildings for several years. Not until 4 B.C. did the buildings come into full use again. The coins follow in sequence again from that time until about A.D. 68 to 70, when the monastery was finally destroyed and never again occupied.

One other fascinating discovery by Father de Vaux points up the difference between the customs of the Essenes and those general in the world at that time.

Not far from the site of the buildings, Father de Vaux found a cemetery. There were over a thousand graves. Most of the skeletons in the graves opened were of men, although it is believed that at least one is a woman. The bones are very brittle and all were placed in the grave in position with hands at the sides or crossed at the pelvis. None of the usual burial "gifts," a common practice at the time, were found in these graves. This startling



We know that an earthquake occurred

fact sets the Essenes apart from all other sects of the time and brings them much closer to the early Christians.

Arrowheads were found at the site and there are signs of walls having been smashed by Roman war engines, as well as further signs of burning. It is clear that the people living in these buildings were attacked with swift and terrible speed. They had been forced to flee or die, and again Josephus has something to tell us. This event ended the occupancy of the site, and as the centuries passed, the sands of the desert slowly covered it, hiding it from the eyes of man until Muhammad Dib lost his goat.

This story of the Essenes may be something of a missing link. There is reference to them in the Bible, and it is confusing sometimes, because they are also known as the Sons of Zadok. It seems very likely from what we are told by Philo, Josephus, Pliny, and other historians of the time that this sect within the Jewish faith, called the Essenes, became established and flourished during the century before Christ.

During the time of Josephus, the three principal sects of the Jews were the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. Josephus himself seems to have

belonged to the Essenes at one time, although he was eventually linked with the others also.

Scholars are still investigating the story of the Essenes, and we will not have the whole story until the scrolls have finally been pieced together, translated, and studied. This is a formidable task, one that may take as long as fifty years to complete.

Many things about the Essenes indicate a kinship with the Christian faith. The Essenes were a brotherhood bound together more closely and more strictly than the other Jewish sects. They were puritan in aspect, disapproving of pleasure and advocating temperance. They renounced wealth and ate only the simplest of foods. They ate their meals in a common dining hall, and the property of one was the property of all. They were farmers and shepherds, and many artisans were among them who aided them in their self-sufficiency and desire to remain aloof from the ways of the world of which they disapproved.

The Essenes cultivated silence, and their habit was to allow one person to speak at a time. They were very strict in observing the Sabbath. They would not make instruments of war, nor did they engage in commerce. They believed that human brotherhood is natural for men and that it is de-

stroyed only by covetous competition. They would take in orphaned children and raise them in their beliefs. They studied herbal medicine and knew much about sicknesses. They were strict in observing personal and communal cleanliness. They always dressed in white. The Essenes did not believe in animal sacrifice, a common practice in their era. They believed the soul to be indestructible and that only the body died. On many points they held beliefs and attitudes common to Christianity.

It seems there is more than a coincidental link between the Essenes and the Christians, but this cannot be definitely known until further study has been completed.

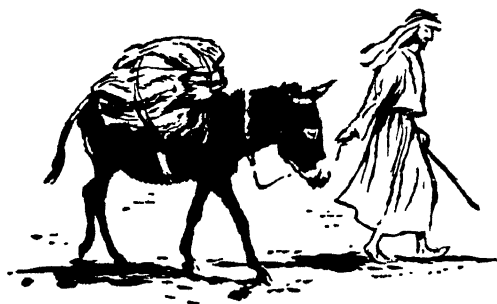
The Essenes seem to have performed many useful functions that were later sustained by the monks of medieval monasteries. In particular, they kept alive the spirit of learning. Perhaps the caves were their *Genizah*, but some scholars prefer the theory that the scrolls were hidden hastily in the caves before sudden flight.

New members of the sect of the Essenes were required to swear that they would “forever hate the unjust and fight the battles of the just.”

Certain it is that Muhammad Dib and the Ta-

amirah Bedouins could not have had any idea of the importance to both Jews and Christians of the scrolls they found in the caves at Wadi Qumran.

We are already certain of this much: When the studies of the scrolls and the ruins are completed, we shall have a much clearer understanding of Biblical events, and more definite proof of the political, religious, and historical events that took place during the century before Christ and the century after.



CHAPTER TEN *The Words of the
Scrolls*

SO MANY fragments and scraps of scrolls have been found by this time that it is difficult even to guess what the whole picture will tell us when these scraps are finally pieced together and translated.

They cover a wide variety of subjects and comprise many different books. In the Museum at Jerusalem, these scraps are slowly being pieced together and matched. They are spread on long tables under sheets of glass so that they can be read with a minimum of handling. Slowly they are being softened and made more pliable whenever possible. It will take many years for this task to be completed, and we can only stand in awe of the skill and patience of the workers whose efforts make this possible.

The scrolls which began our story, however, are some of the finest and most complete yet found, and together they comprise six different books. (You will recall that Muhammad Dib had five scrolls and the other Ta-amirah tribesman had three. When they were finally brought together, some of these scrolls proved to be different parts of the same book.)

The first scroll is called the *Saint Mark's Manuscript of Isaiah*. Unrolled, it is about one foot wide and twenty-four feet long. It is made of leather (goat- or sheepskins) sewed end to end. This script has the appearance of being much used, though it is very well preserved. The Hebrew text is written in fifty-four columns.

One of the most interesting things about this scroll is a strange system of markings in the margins. These marks have caused much discussion, and theories as to their meaning vary from a system of notations for definite purposes (much as we make notes in the margins of our schoolbooks) down to the suggestion that they are the mere doodling of a dreamy scribe. It is intriguing to visualize a scribe, some two thousand years ago, sitting over his books and idly marking with his pen while his mind and eyes strayed to the window. All of us

know this feeling and most of us have done the same at one time or another. But the truth is, so far as there is no agreement about these marks, that we do not know what they mean.

There is another and very important reason why this scroll is so valuable. It proves that the Bible we use today reads almost exactly as this scroll reads, despite the centuries and many translations between the two. This scroll of the book of Isaiah indicates numerous things about the men of the Masora, those Jewish scholars and scribes who copied the scrolls and who were responsible for keeping the testaments alive, and also for their accuracy. Many things we formerly only guessed about them we now know to be amazingly accurate and true. We will not give any passages here from this ancient book because it is so much like what is in our own Bible.

The next important scroll contains the *Commentary on Habakkuk*. One portion of this is still missing, the beginning portion, but the rest is quite complete and sufficient for easy identification. This scroll is five feet long and about six inches wide. There is reason to think it was at one time wider than it now appears. It is the most clearly and beautifully written of the scrolls. It seems,



The scrolls are spread on long tables under glass

from its condition, that this scroll was not used as often as the Isaiah scroll before being stored in the cave.

This scroll tells us a great deal about the group which produced it and helps identify them. It mentions many names of persons living at the time and it tells of the habits and beliefs held by the sect that once occupied the buildings near the shores of the Dead Sea.

The text of this scroll quotes from Habakkuk, the thirty-fifth book of the Old Testament. But, after every quotation, there is an explanation of that quotation in terms of the sect's interpretation and understanding of its true meaning.

It is this scroll that mentions the "teacher of righteousness," a shadowy figure who has been the subject of much discussion. For example, the second half of Habakkuk 1:13 is quoted: "Why do ye look on faithless men, but thou art silent at the swallowing by the wicked man of one more righteous than he?" This interpretation follows in the scroll: "This means the house of Absalom and the men of their party, who kept silence at the chastisement of the teacher of righteousness, and did not help him against the man of the lie, who rejected the law in the midst of their whole congregation."

The mystery is: Who was this “teacher of righteousness”? Who was the “man of the lie”? And who, indeed, was Absalom?

These questions have not yet been answered, although again there are several theories. It appears certain, however, that the “teacher of righteousness” was the leader of the sect that occupied these buildings and stored the scrolls in the caves of Wadi Qumran. This “teacher of righteousness” opposed the “man of the lie” with great courage, but was himself violently opposed and persecuted. This is one of the most controversial passages in the scrolls, and interpretation has proved elusive and vexing to scholars.

Let us now look at a small part of the text of this scroll. The italicized words are from the original book of Habakkuk, as copied into the scroll, and then follow the comments of the scribe who wrote the scroll:

Look among the nations, and see; Wonder and be astounded. For I am doing a work in your days that you would not believe if it were told you. This means those who acted treacherously together with the man of the lie, for they did not heed the words of the teacher of righteousness from the mouth of God, and those who acted treacherously against the new covenant, for they did not believe the covenant of God

but profaned his holy name. And truly the saying refers to those who will act treacherously at the end of days: that is, those who are ruthless against the covenant, who do not believe when they hear all the things that are coming upon the last generation from the mouth of the priest into whose heart God put wisdom to explain all the words of his servants the prophets, through whom God declared all the things that are coming upon his people at his congregation.

There we have the comment of an ancient scribe of the sect by the Dead Sea, and a comment upon matters still more ancient.

The third scroll, *The Manual of Discipline*, another very remarkable document, was in two pieces, rolled separately. The two pieces together would make a scroll a bit longer than six feet, and about nine inches wide.

The skin on which this scroll was written is very coarse. It is a much lighter color than the other scrolls Muhammad Dib found. Despite the fact that white ants had eaten at the edges of this scroll, it is in excellent condition. It also seems not to have had much daily usage.

This scroll acquired its name from Mr. Millar Burrows of Yale University, a man who has done much to unravel and explain these ancient books.

But Mr. Burrows himself says that the title suggested by the Jewish scholar Henoeh Yalon is much more accurate: Dr. Yalon proposed the Hebrew title *Serek ha-Yahad*—"The Order of the Community."

If there was ever an original title on the scroll it has been lost. The first part of this scroll was detached before it came into Archbishop Samuel's possession. Perhaps it will turn up among the scraps that are now being sorted and pieced together in Jerusalem.

This scroll tells us the rules for entering the "order" of the sect by the Dead Sea. It tells of their ceremonies and lives and practices of worship. There are strict rules set down for organization and discipline. There is a foreshadowing of the monastic orders which emerged in the early Christian Church. This, too, has been the cause of much discussion.

Let us look at a small portion from the text of this scroll:

When he has completed a year within the community, the masters shall be questioned about his affairs, as to his understanding and his deeds in the law; and if the lot determines that he shall be admitted to the assembly of the community, as directed by the priests

and the majority of the men of their covenant, his wealth and his wages shall be put at the disposal of the man who has supervision over the wages of the masters, and he shall enter it in the account at his disposal, but shall not spend it for the masters.

The new member shall not touch the sacred drink of the masters until he has completed a second year among the men of the community; but when he has completed a second year, he shall be examined with questioning by the masters. If the lot determines that he is to be admitted to the community, he shall be registered in the order of his position among his brethren, for law and for judgment and for the sacred food and for the sharing of his property; and the community shall have his counsel and his judgment.

We might almost call the next scroll the "Mystery Scroll," for it has proved, until very recently, a real puzzle.

From the time of its discovery, this scroll was called the *Lamech Scroll*. It was hard and brittle, and very difficult to handle. In fact, it could not be unrolled. Only a very few words were visible, and among these the name "Lamech" appeared several times. Excitement was therefore high, because it was thought this might be the "Lost Book of Lamech" which is mentioned in an ancient Greek document but which no one has ever seen and of which there is very little known.

The Hebrew University went to great lengths to unroll this badly crushed scroll, and they enlisted the aid of the famous German expert on ancient documents, Professor James Biberkraut.

Professor Biberkraut placed the scroll under glass and slowly increased the humidity within the glass enclosure until, after several months of scientifically controlled humidity, the leather was sufficiently pliable to allow gentle, painstaking unrolling.

Then the mystery was solved. The *Lamech Scroll* did, indeed, discuss Lamech—but it was the Lamech of the book of Genesis! Lamech was the son of Methuselah and the father of Noah. And this scroll has proved to be one of the most exciting of all.

The translations will be released as soon as they have been completed, but we know that the scroll contains four chapters of the Aramaic book of Genesis, and has much to tell us of the journey of Abraham into Egypt. It contains interesting conversations between Abraham and his wife Sarah.

The writing of this scroll may have been done by the same scribe who copied the scroll dealing with *The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness*. The handwriting is very similar, and because of this similarity it is almost certain that this scroll

was written between 1,900 and 2,000 years ago!

The scholars of the world eagerly await the full story of the contents of this scroll, for it is expected to give us much new knowledge of Abraham and others mentioned in Genesis and should throw interesting light upon one of the most important books of our present-day Bible.

The scroll of *The War of the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness* is one of the best-preserved of all the scrolls. It is more than nine feet long and a little more than six inches wide. It is made up of three strips of leather, with pieces of another strip.

When Dr. Sukenik purchased this script from the merchant who was selling it for the Ta-amirah tribesman, it was still wrapped in parchment. It was the only scroll that had the complete outer covering.

This scroll gives directions for the conduct of a war between the "sons of light"—apparently the tribes of Levi, Judah, and Benjamin—and the "sons of darkness," who are supposed to be the Greeks, Edomites, Philistines, Ammonites, and Moabites.

We do not know yet whether this scroll is telling us the story of a war that actually happened, or a war which was being planned, or a war which was

merely a "story." But it tells many fascinating historical details and gives insights into customs which we otherwise might never have known. Trying to discover the truth about this "war" is one of the problems the scholars are now pondering.

Let us look at a small part of the text of this scroll (first chapter):

At the beginning of the undertaking of the sons of light, they shall start against the lot of the sons of darkness, the army of Belial, against the troop of Edom and Moab and the sons of Ammon, against the people of Philistia, and against the troops of the Kittim of Assyria, and with them as helpers the violators of the covenant. The sons of Levi, the sons of Judah, and the sons of Benjamin, the exiles of the desert, shall fight against them and their forces with all their troops, when the exiles of the sons of light return from the desert of the people to encamp in the desert of Jerusalem. And after the battle they shall go up from there against the king of the Kittim in Egypt; and in his time he shall go forth with great wrath to fight against the kings of the north; and his wrath shall destroy and cut off the horn of their strength. That will be a time of salvation for the people of God, and a period of dominion for all the men of his lot, but eternal destruction for all the lot of Belial. And there shall be a great tumult against the sons of Japheth; and Assyria shall fall with none to help him. And the dominion of the Kittim shall

come to an end, so that wickedness shall be laid low without any remnant; and there shall be no survivor of the sons of darkness.

The sixth scroll is called the *Thanksgiving Psalms*. It was in four pieces when Dr. Sukenik purchased it; three pieces were crushed up in a bundle. Dr. Sukenik had great difficulty in unrolling all four pieces.

Altogether, there are about twenty psalms and they are very much like the psalms of the Old Testament, both in text and language. They prove that the custom of writing hymns of praise was still much in use when this group of ruins was in occupation. They are not unlike the hymns we sing in church today.

Let us look at a small and typical example of the psalms contained in this scroll (No. XIII):

I thank thee, O Lord, because thou hast put me
at a source of flowing streams in dry ground,
a spring of water in a land of drought,
channels watering a garden of delight,
a place of cedar and acacia,
together with pine for thy glory,
trees of life in a fount of mystery,
hidden amid all trees that drink water.
They shall put forth a branch for an eternal planting,
taking root before they sprout.

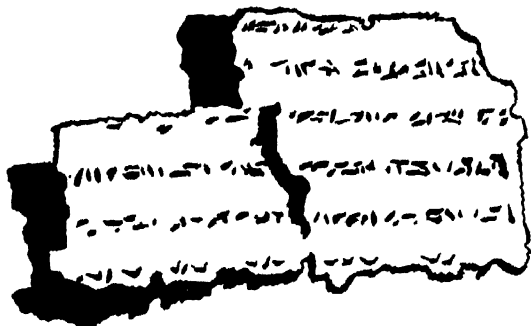
They shall send out their roots to the stream;
its stump shall be exposed to the living water;
and it shall become an eternal source.

When there is a branch on it,
all the beasts of the forest will feed on it;
its stump will be trampled by all that pass by,
its branches by every winged bird;
and all the springs of water shall rise against it.

For in their planting they go astray,
and do not send out a root to the stream.

But he who causes a holy branch
to sprout for a planting of truth
is hiding his mystery, without its being thought of;
without its being known, he is sealing it up.

And thou, O God, hast put a hedge about its fruit
in the mystery of mighty men of valor and holy spirits;
and a flame of fire turning every way.



CHAPTER ELEVEN *The Scrolls*
Today

WHILE Father de Vaux and Dr. Sukenik were busy all those years in Israel and Jordan, Archbishop Samuel was still in America with his scrolls.

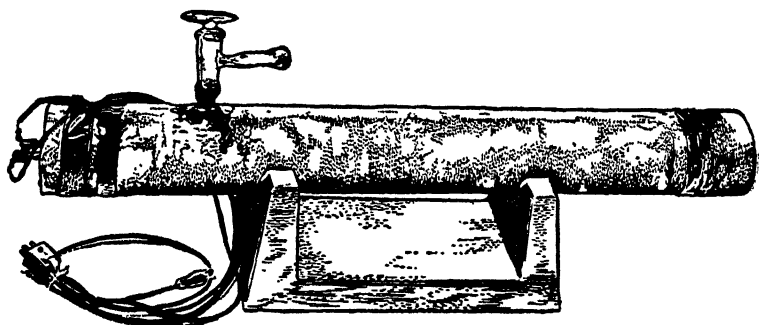
The photographs of the Archbishop's scrolls were studied carefully and translations of the writing made. Finally, after almost three years had passed, the translations were published and the Archbishop waited for somebody to come forward and pay a big price for the scrolls.

But nothing happened. No one offered to buy the scrolls, and the Archbishop grew worried. The scrolls themselves were stored in the safety deposit vault of a bank, but scholars all over the world grew anxious and concerned for their safety, not because they feared they might be stolen, but

because they feared deterioration and ruin for future study.

A few times the Archbishop put them on exhibition, but the response was small.

While the Archbishop was exhibiting his scrolls and seeking to sell them, Father de Vaux and Dr. Sukenik continued with their studies. A piece of linen found at the site of the excavations was sent to the Institute of Nuclear Studies of the University of Chicago. Here it was subjected to the carbon-14 process of measurement. This process, through measurement of the rate of disintegration of carbon 14 in a piece of organic material, can determine the age of such material with a very high degree of accuracy. Since this process demands the destruction of the material so measured, it was very fortunate that a small piece of linen was available from the wrappings of a scroll.



When an archaeologist makes a discovery and locates ancient objects, one of the first and most important questions is: How old is it?

To answer that all-important question, we no longer rely on speculation, guesswork, or even solely upon comparison and study of ancient records. Physicists and chemists have made such remarkable advances that we now use their discoveries as aids in other fields of scientific research. The recent development of atomic energy and the study of the atom has resulted in many discoveries which Dr. Willard F. Libby, of the Institute for Nuclear Studies at the University of Chicago, has put to good use. He is responsible for discovering a near-perfect method for determining the age of an object. This method has been substantiated by authenticated documentary evidence.

Every living thing absorbs from the atmosphere as a natural process carbon 14. Carbon 14 is the radioactive atom of the element carbon. But, when something dies, the intake of carbon 14 stops. Not only does it stop, the carbon 14 which has been inducted begins to disintegrate very slowly—so slowly, in fact, that we know it loses one-half of the carbon 14 every 5,500 years! Since we know, usually, the amount of carbon 14 in a

living thing, we know the amount of carbon that an old object had when it was "living," and we can, by measuring with a Geiger counter, find out how much of its original carbon 14 is gone. Then, mathematically, we can determine the age of the object.

Dr. Libby started his experiments with the known amount of carbon 14 in a tree. He placed a Geiger counter over a portion of wood that had been used to make an object. He secured an accurate count of the remaining number of atoms of carbon 14. Then he computed the number of carbon-14 atoms which had decayed, figured the number of years it took them to decay, and was able to say how old the piece of wood was. Dr. Libby found that this piece of wood had lost exactly half of its carbon 14; therefore, he knew positively that the piece of wood was cut from a tree 5,500 years ago!

Among other experiments, Dr. Libby showed the accuracy of his key to the past by using an ancient Egyptian funeral boat as a test. These model boats were placed in the tombs of the dead. A boat from the tomb of King Sesostris III was studied in this test, and it was well established by documentary proof that this King had died in 1849 B.C. Us-

ing his carbon-14 test, Dr. Libby found that the wood in the boat indicated that it was cut from a tree in 1849 B.C.—so, mathematically, and scientifically, the carbon-14 test proved accurate in a most dramatic manner.

The measurements made at Chicago established as fact the age of the material in the scrolls. It did not, of course, tell us how long the scrolls had been lying in the caves, but it did prove that they were authentic in an unquestionable manner, and it is now more than safe to assume that they were in the caves when the place was attacked and abandoned about A.D. 68 to 79.

Sadly, the world lost a great scholar when Dr. Sukenik died. It had been a great vexation to him that many of the scrolls were beyond reach of his personal study. It had been his dream that all the old manuscripts would be brought together in one place for study, and would become a treasure of the land of Israel.

Dr. Sukenik's son undertook, as a memorial to his father, the realization of his father's dream. In the summer of 1954, he came to America, and with the cooperation of a wealthy American, Mr. D. Samuel Gottesman, of New York City, arrangements were finally made to purchase the Arch-

bishop's scrolls. The price is said to have been \$250,000; and once it was paid, the precious scrolls were flown back to Israel, the country of their origin, and reunited with the other scrolls.



The strange objects found by Muhammad Dib in the "cave of riches" rest safely today in buildings belonging to the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. A handsome new wing, to be called the Shrine of the Book, is being constructed, and when it is completed, the scrolls will be housed there and will be available to all scholars for examination and study.

In addition to the original scrolls, other scrolls and countless fragments have been added to the collection. Father de Vaux still plays a large part in the work that is necessary. Despite the scholarly disagreements, a great sense of excitement and adventure surrounds the further study of these priceless treasures from the dim past.

There are countless boxes of fragments, thousands of them which had been collected for sorting. But since the work on the first scrolls is a long way from completion, the sorting of these fragments proceeds slowly. The pieces are sometimes so tiny that they bear only one letter. Some of them are as big as the palm of your hand. Great care has been taken to keep these fragments in order, and all the boxes are marked with the names of the caves in which the fragments were found.

These fragments vary in color from dark brown to a light tan, which simplifies sorting somewhat, and when they are piled on a table for sorting, they look like leaves raked up in the fall. When pieces are selected for study, they are first put into a "humidifier," a glass bell containing moist sponges. This process softens the scrap so that it will not crumble when handled. When softened, the pieces are next cleaned with a soft brush dipped

in alcohol or castor oil. If a piece of scroll is too blackened for the letters on it to be read, it is photographed with infrared rays and then scrutinized through a magnifying glass. The precious piece is finally flattened under glass, and the scholars begin the arduous task of trying to fit it into the giant jigsaw puzzle of the scrolls.

Although there has been disagreement about the meaning of what they say, the scrolls originally found by Muhammad Dib were fairly easy to read in comparison with the scraps found later. But there are also other scrolls which are still surrounded with mystery.

In addition to the surprise awaiting us in the *Lamech Scroll*, there is another, greater mystery to be solved.

In 1952, in a small cave near the original "cave of riches," resting against the wall, one on top of the other, two more scrolls were discovered—*made of copper!* They were very tightly rolled and had suffered badly from oxidation.

These copper scrolls had writing on them—for it could be seen, and a few words were traced from the outside—but they were rolled with the writing inside.

The big problem was: How could they be un-

rolled without shattering them into a thousand useless fragments? If they were forced open, they would be destroyed and their message lost forever. They were green and moldy looking and terribly brittle.

Scholars all over the world debated the story that might be behind these unusual scrolls. It was generally agreed that the copper scrolls had been placed in their secret cave hurriedly and that an earthquake later covered the entrance and shut the mysterious scrolls from sight. And from the few words which were decipherable, exciting speculations arose. There seemed to be a series of numbers on the scrolls, and the word accompanying those numbers could have meant either "place" or "buried." Other strange phrases were read, too, which included the words "above," "on this side," and "in the room." Could it mean the location of something?

The inspiration of scholars is often as exciting as that inspiration which has given the world its greatest works of art. One scholar, Professor K. G. Kuhn, of the University of Heidelberg, Germany, used a mirror to inspect the few phrases that were visible on the tightly rolled copper scrolls, and he insisted that the scrolls indicated the position of a

vast buried treasure. Many people thought him very foolish. Such things only happened in books! Others, bearing in mind the Essenes' lack of concern with worldly things, disagreed with Professor Kuhn on the grounds that this religious sect would not hoard such treasure.

As the weeks and months extended into years, the problem of unrolling these copper scrolls remained unsolved. Many scientists experimented and offered suggestions, but all of these were too dangerous to try. No element of chance could be allowed that risked the destruction of the scrolls through any miscalculation.

At last, early in 1956, Manchester University, in England, announced one exciting word: "*Success!*"

Working with great patience and infinite skill, scholars there had carefully covered the rolled up, oxidized scrolls with a heavy coat of clear plastic. This removed all chance of the brittle copper crumbling into dust. Then, inch by careful inch, they gently sawed the scrolls in strips, slowly removing strip after strip of the ancient copper. When completed, the scrolls proved to be about eight feet long, and twelve inches wide. Laid flat on a table they resembled a widely corrugated material. With this task successfully accomplished,

the scrolls were returned to Jerusalem for study.

Now another diligent scholar took over the task of translation, Reverend J. P. Milik, a Roman Catholic priest. The good priest could scarcely believe the strange message as revealed to him from the mysterious copper scrolls. Could this be true? Definitely, these two scrolls were unlike the others. These had no religious writing at all.

It was determined by Professor Albright that these scrolls had been written some time between 1 and 68 A.D. They were written in Mishnaic Hebrew, and they are believed to be the earliest known examples of that Hebrew dialect.

An ancient legend tells an interesting story. When the Babylonians destroyed the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem, the Hebrews hastened to hide the enormous treasures kept there. In an unknown place, the Hebrews worked furiously to hide their fabulous treasure from the Babylonians. A carefully coded message was scratched out to show the way to the hidden treasure.

Some scholars theorize that the Essenes, because of their reputation for integrity and strong moral character, were given this record of the treasure for safekeeping. Perhaps it was never reclaimed because the Hebrews who knew the whereabouts of

the record were killed during the fighting and troubles which followed the destruction of the Temple. Thus the record remained in its place of safety, apparently, until the Romans destroyed the monastery of the Essenes.

Other scholars argue that these copper scrolls are the inventory of the Essenes, the list of their treasures. This theory maintains that the list was hidden in the cave when the Romans attacked and destroyed the buildings at Wadi Qumran.

The fact that these scrolls are on copper is most significant, for copper was a very expensive metal in those days and was only used for records which were of the utmost importance and value. Copper was tougher than the usual parchment or skins used for scrolls, and the other scrolls found were all, as we know, made of skins or parchment.

So it is not definitely known whether the vast treasure recorded on these copper scrolls is the lost treasure of the ancient Temple of the Hebrews, or the inventory of the monastery of the Essenes, or even some immense treasure of which we have no previous knowledge—but that it *is* a treasure we can be sure. For here is some of the writing from the copper scrolls as it was translated and released to the world in June, 1956:

In the cistern which is below the rampart, on the east side, in a place hollowed out of rock: six hundred bars of silver.

Which cistern is this? Is it the large cistern found at the monastery of the Essenes? Or is it another, as yet undiscovered, cistern?

The scrolls use the term "talents" when mentioning money. This was the ancient standard of measurement, and a talent was 131.5 troy pounds by modern measurement. Silver, today, is worth approximately ninety cents a troy ounce. All this means that the silver referred to in the copper scrolls would be worth over \$5,000,000 today.

Let us examine still another excerpt from the treasure scrolls:

Close by, below the southern corner of the portico at Zadok's tomb, and underneath the pilaster in the exedra, a vessel of incense in pine wood and a vessel of incense cassia wood.

What does this strange message mean? And who was Zadok? There was a priest named Zadok in the time of Solomon, but where his tomb is to be found, no one knows.

And still another mysterious message has come to light:

In the pit near by, towards the north, there is a copy of this book with explanations, measurements, and all details.

And thus the scrolls tell us of the existence of “this book,” evidently another scroll, which gives specific and detailed instructions on how to locate the fabulous treasure. But where is this scroll? And the “pit near by”—does that mean near the cave where the copper scrolls were found? Or does it mean near the Temple destroyed by the Babylonians?

Many scholars are highly skeptical that the site of this treasure will ever be found, because of the changes in the earth’s surface that have taken place in that area through the centuries. Yet who can say what secrets lie in other caves or remain buried beneath the shifting sands? But a few years ago, the scrolls themselves lay where they had rested for about two thousand years—and thus far, Reverend Milik’s work on the copper scrolls has turned up over *sixty* references to buried treasure in the area between Israel and Jordan!

If the treasure exists—and the scrolls indicate that it does—its wealth staggers our imaginations, for it includes two hundred *tons* in gold and silver

alone! Today, that amount of gold would be worth well over \$200,000,000!

If the clues on the copper scrolls can be deciphered—if the detailed instructions are located—if the site can be determined and excavated—and if the find proves to be the lost treasure of the Temple . . . then Muhammad Dib's hunt for his lost goat that day in 1947 may have started the greatest treasure hunt of all time!



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About the Author

Alan Honour has a special interest in the Dead Sea Scrolls since he has actually lived with a Bedouin tribe and has spent several years in the area where the scrolls were found.

Born in London in 1918, he remained there to study until 1939, when he joined the Royal Air Force. Radio Intelligence assigned him first to Norway, then to France, and then to the Middle East for four years. A five-month hitch-hiking trip from Ismailia, Egypt, to Khankakin, Iran, took him through Sinai, Palestine, Syria, and Iraq.

After the war, Mr. Honour returned to London, but soon left for France and then Italy, where he worked on film scripts. He is now living and working in the United States, and has recently become a citizen of this country.

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