

# WELCOME AND SCHOOL

Do unto others  
As ye would  
That they  
Should  
Do unto  
you.

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## An Abandoned Camp-Fire in the Arabian Desert.

BY THE REV. EDWARD A. RAND.

Ah! what is this? The gray ashes of a fire gone out; a few clustered sooty stones that served as fireplace; a little debris scattered here and there. All around us is a rough, sandy pasture-land, with scanty herbage—no house, no flocks, nobody. We are in the open pasture-lands of Arabia. Just here half an hour ago was a Bedouin's tent. It rises up before our thoughts even as it stood then—a roof of rough goat's hair, stained black, thrown over several small poles. A six foot man could reach up and touch the dark ceiling. Under this one roof are housed the male and female members of the encampment, a partition shutting off by themselves the women and the children. You will not see much furniture in the tent. Old Mustapha, the head of this encampment, was once in Damascus—a fact he has never forgotten. As a relic of this visit he brought back with him a piece of old carpeting. That is on the ground today, and old Mustapha is very likely to appropriate it to himself. Scattered about you will see halters and saddles for the camels, several platters, a drinking bowl of wood, two or three vessels for cooking. At one side of this tent you notice old Mustapha's arms—his rusty old matchlock, his crooked sword, his big sheath-knife. At the door is his spear, thrust into the ground. What more does Mustapha want? When he moved this morning, see what quick work he made of it. He packed his tent and his other goods into a few bundles that he bound to the backs of his camels. Now he can go where he



THE ARAB CHIEF.

pleases, and he has gone. This ash-heap, those stones that the fire left its imprint upon, are all there is to say, "Old Mustapha camped here." He has gone beyond that low ridge of land lying bare and brown to the sun, hoping to find for his flock or his herd

verdure to which the heat has been more kindly.

What a life old Mustapha leads? He is a nomad, a shepherd, a herdsman, in the rough, open pasture-land of Arabia, and his Bedouin father before him was just that, and nothing more.

He belongs to a clan, or tribe able to muster a good many lances. A rough, wild-looking set they are. He is very proud of his tribe and its sheikh. He knows of only one person that can surpass that sheikh in wisdom and valour, and the one person is old Mustapha. He has a long string of facts at his tongue's end about his tribe—how grand it is, how numerous, while its origin is as far distant as the high-lands of the cold white moon. Old Mustapha has no books; he never could write his name. All his information, therefore, he carries in the saddle-bags of his memory. It is justly suspected that old Mustapha rides this patient beast too hard sometimes, and what Memory cannot bring to him the wings of Imagination easily furnish.

In his religious preferences old Mustapha is a Mohammedan, but out in the open, sweeping pasture-land he is not that devotee he might be if living in Mecca. The five prayers a day that a good Mohammedan raises old Mustapha thinks are unnecessary. If Mecca were Damascus, he might make a pilgrimage there; as it is, he will visit Mecca by proxy, content with the pilgrimages of other Arabians. Still, his language may be—at times—very religious, and he can say "Allah" as devoutly as any one in Mecca. Like some other people, even in America, he is apt to divorce religion and morality. He can make a thing big, exaggerating, as when he talks about his

great ancient tribe, or he can make a big thing nothing. How to cut down and puff up old Mustapha well understands. If he should lie to your face, it might trouble you, but it would not be likely to annoy his conscience. He has some singular ideas, also, about