Looking over a portion of the oasis of Nizwa (Oman) from a cannon port in the large round fortress in Muscat. The cannon is made of brass and was brought to Muscat from Portugal about 1550. After the Portuguese were driven out of Muscat about 1660 it was carried to this spot.

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# 238  Winter, 1954-1955
The Arabian Mission

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(Continued on page 15)
A Day In Amarah

Christine A. Voss

It seemed that throughout the night the breeze was as warm as during the early evening. Upon awakening in the morning and coming down from the roof I found everything was damp. My sheets had felt damp and the ground was almost muddy. The wind was shergie (from the East) and it would be a humid day.

Getting up with the sun has its advantages and I always enjoy the two hours before breakfast. This morning the "Mother of One," as we call her because that is the meaning of her name, came at 6:30 as usual to clean the floor. She worked quietly as she went from room to room dusting the floor on her hands and knees. After she had finished, she came to me and said, "I want to tell you something." A sweet smile covered her face. "Last night I had a dream," she said. "and a man came and spoke to me. I know it was Jesus because of the way he looked, and he said to me, 'Don't forget my teachings, and don't let go of your faith in me.' " She was plainly thrilled about the dream and in all sincerity she talked of the changes she had noticed in her life since she began to learn about Jesus. After some discussion she said, "I would like to pray," and she bent over to rest her hands on the small table beside me as she offered a beautiful prayer of faith and thanksgiving. After she had finished and I had prayed she wiped away a tear and walked away with the usual farewell, "In the faith of God."

I was thankful for such a beautiful beginning of the new day, and it was encouraging because many times it seems that we accomplish little. I often feel that way about the hospital work, too, and yet looking back we see that there has been progress, and indeed the Lord has blessed our work. We have had mostly untrained help and now are so grateful for the results of the educational program for the staff that was begun last year. It is surprising how soon one can notice the difference. The beds are made better, the medicines and treatments are given more systematically and the staff has learned that the patient is the most important person in the hospital and is our chief concern. Those of the staff who have shown an interest in the gospel message have also shown an interest in helping with the evangelistic
work done on the wards. It is a real joy to have one of the boys ask if he may read the Scripture passage, and to hear the "Mother of One" add her explanation of the lesson in a way the women will understand.

Our daily chapel service is at 7:30 A.M. and that begins the day for all the mission employees. We then go to our work and most of the group work in the hospital, either the clinic or upstairs with the inpatients. Besides keeping busy with the routine duties in the morning, little things come up that demand one's attention. This morning first thing I was met by the sweeper who complained about the watermelon seeds and rinds that still littered the floor following a watermelon party one of the patients had had the night before. Checking on the staff and their work and helping them with things unfamiliar to them is probably the most routine task of the day, and the little complaints, squabbles, and problems that come up are the bits of spice that give variety. A few of the boys have not gone to school; learning to read and write in a foreign language (our records are kept in English) without having learned either art in their own language is quite an undertaking.

This morning I checked to see how one of the boys was getting along. He does the dressings quite well, but charting them on the nurses' notes is what is difficult. For several days I had helped him with charting only DRESSING CHANGED and now at least a week has elapsed since he was on dressings so I wondered if he had remembered. I showed him one of the charts, pointed to the two words he had printed and asked if he could read it. Well, poor boy, he was having as much difficulty in recognizing it as if I were quizzed the same in Arabic. He could neither figure out the letters nor guess what it might mean so I decided he had more to learn and I had better figure out a better way to teach.

Because of the need of public health work and my particular interest in that phase of nursing, we attempted a limited program which permitted me to leave the hospital a couple of hours three mornings
a week to make home calls. This morning I made the regular call on Hulwa who is a tuberculosis patient. Her husband is not interested in her as long as she is not well so she stays with a widowed sister whose little reed hut is about a block from the hospital. As I sat on the floor in that hut beside my open bag, surrounded by the patient and her curious friends, I told them of the Saviour we love and who loves us. The picture on the leaflet I left for them drew much attention and it seemed they were all eager to hear of this One who gives relief from our burdens. It seemed as I talked that there was interest and some comprehension, and when one of the women began to ask a question I was really encouraged. But I was a poor judge. She had been interested, all right, but interested in my bag. She said, "My eyes hurt me; do you have eye drops in your bag?" As I walked away I thought the call was worthwhile only as far as Hulwa's streptomycin injection was concerned. Then I reminded myself that whatever is done for the Lord is not done in vain. The Lord could use even that short call to His glory.

We do our surgery in the afternoons and this afternoon our first case was a patient about whom we were a little worried. She had a large tumor but it was removed successfully and her condition appears good. How we thank the Lord for answering our prayers—and hers. She had a spinal anesthetic so was awake during the operation and audibly entrusted herself to God and to Jesus Christ of whom she had heard in the ward. We continue to pray that she will truly know Him and accept Him as her Saviour.

The work day usually ends around six or six-thirty P.M. and although we can never say our work is finished we go home thankful for what we could do, and pray that during the day someone might have been helped in a way that brings glory to our Master.

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**Community Witness In Kuwait**

**Donald R. MacNeill**

The "island" that is Arabia has faced many challenges and crises in its history, but none as critical as the present situation. Throughout the Arab East the tides of sheer materialism, nationalism, dollar diplomacy and communism are rising. Day by day they are eating into the headlands of faith, hope and justice, collapsing all of the basic ideologies of man, both of the Near East and of the West.

This is true throughout the entire Middle East. It rises to gigantic size when we touch on the situation in Kuwait which is richly endowed with black gold, oil, and over the past six years especially it has mushroomed in size and population. It is now a melting pot of the entire world. Steadily rising throughout all this, however, is the relentless tide, changing the simple Bedouin into a cosmopolitan figure, transforming what was once a stronghold of Muslim faith into a hodgepodge of nothingness.
In the midst of Kuwait stands the Christian Mission reminding all people, Muslim and Christian alike, that there is a Rock, against whom all the tides of materialism and doubt cannot prevail. This is the task of Christian evangelism, the making real of the Christ as Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

Nothing should be spared to present Christ as a living reality to the people around us. But we are not here alone as a Mission; we are here as a mission of the Church. We speak from community, the community of Christ’s followers. There was a time when Christians in Kuwait were numbered on the fingers of a hand; now they are numbered in the thousands. We live as a part of a Christian community and our work must speak out of the experience of that community. Our services, held in Indian dialects, Syriac, Armenian, Arabic and English, draw together the community in worship and service. Although we are not here primarily as a parish church, we realize that it is through the witness of Christian men and women to the fact of Christ in the Church that Christ is made real to the non-Christians round about us. Therefore, the church is the center of the life of the community. Fellowship and worship must be planned for the growth and uplift of the community. This is a part of the Christian Evangel. This is evangelism through the witness of the community.

Many have said that the work in Kuwait is medical. Our reply is that the work of the Mission in Kuwait is the proclamation of the Evangel, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. To that extent and to that end we have hospitals and schools. The work in the men’s hospital and in the women’s hospital is dedicated to the making real of the Presence of Christ to the hospitalized, to Muslims, to all who come. They come for release from physical pain or incapacity, but they must hear of the Healing Christ who brings not only release from the pains of the body but from the agonies of the soul as well. The hospitals are not separate from the church, but an extension of the Church; they seek to lead people into the life of the Body of Christ.
This all sounds well as a theory of medical evangelism, but it is a far more difficult task to bring this to pass in our hospitals. The mission hospitals in Kuwait are filled to overflowing with inpatients; the morning clinics serve hundreds; the staff is limited. Our American doctors and nurses can, and do, give a witness to Christ through their work. But little spiritual leadership can be exerted when they must see over a hundred within the three hours of a morning clinic. The two minutes or so possible with each patient leaves little enough time for medical care, let alone spiritual concern. This means that the responsibility for a full and direct presentation of the Christian Evangel is shifted, through necessity and call of work, and in spite of the frustration of our doctors, from the medical personnel to a hospital or station evangelist. In the women’s hospital this is a full time job for the one in charge of women’s evangelism, leaving little time for visiting in and around the community. In the men’s hospital it is divided, oftentimes inadequately, between the colporteur who is directly responsible for the Bible shop in the market, and the one in charge of men’s evangelism, the minister of the station.

Ideally, this is the opportunity for the community. So, in seeking to meet this challenge of evangelism, we have sought to make use of it. We are aware that the evangelizing agent is not the ordained minister, the station evangelist, the doctor, but rather the whole Christian fellowship. We do not feel that it is sufficient to rely on a Christian attitude or a Christian atmosphere. It is the witness of the Christian community that is necessary. We are continually asking our Christian workers not to think of themselves merely as medical workers, but as Christian ambassadors. This is a difficult job, for, under the shadow of the crescent, most native Christians seek to hide their light to avoid controversy.

We have set before us an ideal which we hope to meet in presenting the claim of Christ to hospital patients. In reaching this ideal we hope to make fuller use of the community of Christians.

Our difficulty is with the little Abdullahs that come in for clinic care, for medicines for minor colds and infections. As he waits to
see the doctor in the morning hours, he will hear directly from one of us the words of our Lord as they are presented in the clinic prayers and talk. We will see before his eyes verses from the Bible, dealing with the message that Christ has for him. In the average period of one hour in the clinic, he will hear many times of the works and power of Christ. The use of a wire recorder, presenting mid-morning messages in a series of languages, is being realized. Presentation of tracts and portions of Scriptures with personal explanations will be made. He will know of the care and concern of Christ for him.

Ali, who undergoes an operation with its necessary hospitalization, will hear and be confronted more effectively with the Gospel. Perhaps he will spend the average of eleven days in the hospital. In his room he will be able to see before him daily a picture illustrating one of the teachings of our Lord. He too will read verses placed throughout the hospital. Over the period of his stay, he will have heard the complete story of the act of God in Christ, and what it should mean to him. There will be visitors sitting at his bedside, filled with as much concern for his spiritual healing as they have for his physical recuperation. He will see in film strips and films the dramatic re-telling of the life of our Lord. He will have the opportunity to share in worship.

The instrument for this evangelism is the community and the church. We do not point to the doctor or the minister as the Christians, but we point to them as representatives of the church, the Christian community of Kuwait. We must speak out of that community experience and not merely from our backgrounds in the Christian west. Beholding the witnessing local fellowship, administering in need and to need, those about us will see the power of Christ operative in this land, not as a foreign importation, but as something which has a relevancy to them. They have seen Christ's love among their own.

This is not a new method of evangelism, but for us it involves a re-evaluation of what we have and what we can do. It is not a subsidized Christianity, for it involves making use of our Christians, not as paid workers, but as consecrated ambassadors of Christ. It involves our working out of the community, rather than standing aloof from it. It involves our making reference to the hospitals, not as American mission hospitals, but as the hospitals of the Good Shepherd. We have come here not to establish the Mission as an esteemed and valuable institution placed within the borders of Kuwait, but to establish the Church of Jesus Christ, even with her medical mission, in the lands of the Arab.
October 15 In Matrah

Ethel S. Thoms

Yesterday, Friday, October 15 is as good a day as any to write about. With the early prayer call the sky began to lighten to the east. The halfmoon overhead trailed a tiny bright star as a sailboat trails its gulls. The rugged mountain rim which rings the town of Matrah and hugs it close stood out as sharp as cardboard cutouts against the brightening sky. The morning sounds began to drift in—the banging of tins from the harbor where fishermen were scouring fish into their nets; the quick hoof clicks of a donkey train and the slow shuffle of a camel caravan passing on the road below; the crowing of cockerels; the cawing of crows and the tinkling of brass pestle on mortar as coffee is being prepared. A vendor calls his wares as, tray balanced on head, he hurries by date stick huts calling, "Lola Sakhin" (hot cakes).

"Subakh-al-khair" (good morning)—prayers were over and breakfast before that. We shook hands all around (we are the most hand-shaking people!). Then in the course of greetings I heard news of our community. Fatimah said, "Mother has a headache today and couldn't come to prayers." Showana said, "Zowaina has gone to Birkah to arrange for the garden's care. The gardener left and people say the bull and calf are wandering loose." Hajar said, "We had a snake in our house last night. It got away and hurt no one but Zahara is weak from fright." Zahara is a scale-breaker and the humor of the situation is not lost on Hajar. Zalaikha in Bahrain has written Beebe she is homesick for the good dry air of Muscat and will be returning by the next ship.

The hymn we sang in morning prayers uplifted me. What did it do for all those others standing now in the hall by the hospital storeroom, each one waiting to get his day's work supplies? The refrain went through my mind with a thrill—"tem al khalasu haleluyah ranimu"—glory, glory, hallelujah, completed is our salvation," almost Christ's own words. "It is finished." These words encompass unspeakable magnitude, for me and for each one standing there.

Wells came into the storeroom with Meroke to get paint. Meroke, one of the hospital sweepers, has proved himself to be a good painter—but choice of color and lines of demarcation must be carefully explained as he is to paint the delivery room of the women's hospital.

Beebe was sorting hospital laundry. There was a big pile of it which weighed more than she did. Each day she brings in hospital sheets and pillow cases and operating room drapes, washed, ironed and clean, thanks to Tide and a Kenmore washing machine.

Rasoon was filling medical supply needs of the three hospitals. Malallah was giving out clean uniform coats and aprons to the other workers. He is a careful and indispensable laboratory technician and
X-ray man and he helps me with the checking of the hospital linen and supplies as an extra voluntary duty. He said, "Four aprons you say? I see only three." This to Qumber who has charge of the operating room. "Three aprons you get until you bring in the fourth!" Hospital linen makes durable Omani wear and must be checked carefully.

Moosa, who is in charge of wards at the contagious hospital and was ill all week came to prayers and said he had a few words and would wait in the mejlis until I finished with Sulaiman the cook. While giving Sulaiman his orders for the day I was reminded of our first years with Arabic. "Today," I'd say. "Get this cut." Then I would place my hand on the appropriate part of my anatomy. The cook in sympathy with my attempt at clarity would imitate me. Perhaps on second thought I would say. "Get this cut, too." He would imitate me again. After all these goings-on he always brought home a few shapeless bits of meat strung on a date leaf fiber. So now it's much simpler. We don't buy cuts but just lehem—a kind of meat, the Muscat kind.

Sulaiman after accounts dressed up and went down town and sat for a while with the city fathers and drank coffee. Purchases are incidental to his daily trip to the bazaar.

Taiseer, the gardener who looks like a clod out of his garden, was washing the back porch and straightened up to talk to me as I went by, putting on a deprecating smile said, "Mabrook is here, back from the field force at Dugham." The British are prospecting for oil there and Mabrook's job is to protect them from raids by the Bedouin. "He is a corporal now," continues Taiseer. That was true and right smart Mabrook looked in his new uniform. He is a suitor for the hand of one of our girls, Jameela, Nubi's daughter.

And now for Moosa. He had come to borrow money. I gave it to him in order to save his life. He needs it to effect the divorce from his wife—he for the first time, she for the ninth. She had beaten him up once too often (this time when he was ill with malaria) until a neighbor intervened and got a black eye for his trouble.
It was now eight o'clock and time to go on rounds with Wells at the contagious hospital. A new tuberculosis patient was admitted and needed soap and clothes. "Eggs for Said and Dadoke." I jotted down the orders Wells gave. At the leper home I wrote, "Burn Ali's old clothes." This leper had new ones to wear but kept them in his box. Outpatients were there for their treatments, among them Abdul Maseeh. Wells suggested, "Find time to talk to Abdul Maseeh and find out why he continues to write charms for sorcery after he has chosen to call himself the slave of Christ."

Back at the storeroom I was measuring cloth for sheets and mattress covers when Ghareeb found me to say that there were two women waiting for me in the mejlis. Maasooma was there with Moosa's wife, Shakhatoon, who had come to justify herself. She said, "Why has Moosa done this? I have done nothing." I would she were right and told her so. She was angry with me for not taking her part. I invited her to continue to come to our house as she had done in the past. Since then she has come to mejlis.

Miriam came next and took the sheets away to sew. I looked in on the mattress maker and found him hitting several pounds of new cotton with a stick to knock the twigs and stones and husks out of it. Then I went back to the office to work on accounts. The fiscal year for our mission was over and the year's accounts for the hospital had to be handed over to our colleagues for an audit.

Clinic was a big one and Wells came in at two-thirty for lunch with a shout that was heard all over the house. "Jeeb al akil!" (Bring on the chow.) Abdominal surgery was on Wells' schedule for that afternoon. I had the weekly mejlis for women. By three-thirty neighbors, friends from town and from out of town and women from the hospital had gathered and were seated, Arab style, on mats on the floor in the social room. We numbered seventy-two adults out of which number eight could read and accepted hymn books. They chose hymns which we sang, then we read a psalm. I read a portion of Scripture, explained the meaning of it and offered prayer. We read the story of Rebecca, a wonderfully Arab story. My part done, the women took over. Two passed dates, two poured coffee and the rest talked. It was noisy but cheerful. Three women from Nizwa and four from Somayal and several from nearby villages were at mejlis. As I greeted each woman and sat with each for a while I received invitations to visit homes and to bring a friend with me and The Book from which to read.

Rubua stayed after the others had gone. She had been in Teiwee for four years and waited to bring her news up to date. Amaira stayed. She is a poor woman so I gave her some guild box outing flannel to make a warm gown for winter. A stranger was there too with a baby. I came to find out that the baby weighing about eight pounds was two years old. She said, "I went to the hospital and they gave the baby injections but the medicine was only quinine and the baby is no better." She promised to come in the morning for milk powder. That evening I checked the case with Wells. He remembered the
child; his memory for people is astonishing. "That child has tuberculosis and was given streptomycin," he said.

Salih and Ghareeb work for us and go to school mornings from 8 to 12. Their job Friday afternoons is to polish brass. At five o'clock they were done. Four of their pals were on hand to play. I gave them hockey sticks which I had intended to give them at Christmas. They had seen them and wanted them so badly, and besides it is good to see them playing.

A check at the leper home had to be done to see that clean-up orders had been carried out. Sharbanoo, who was the first patient to occupy a room even before the entire hospital was completed, is now an arrested case. She's only slightly disfigured but she is an old woman and had no place to go so she stays on as a sort of house mother —she Wendys the lost boys. She has seen Ali's new clothes and wants a set for her brother. "But," I remind her, "your brother works for the government and never comes to see you or helps you in any way."

"Then," she said, "I'd like an incense burner." That's a joke on me; I showed such simplicity she had to laugh. "You sent us each some frankincense yesterday and I have nothing to burn it in." She got her incense burner.

Have we time yet for Shareefa's story? It was dark when I got home and she was there. Her older sister Moza is an inquirer who comes for lessons but Shareefa has never been to see me. She came then to get her goat which the boys found in the garden and tied to a tree. She didn't bring up the subject right away but hedged and began to talk about herself. I remembered it was she who got Abdul Maseeh to write sorcery against her husband and sister Mithla. The charm was ineffective for Khamees left Shareefa and married Mithla. Shareefa drove him to it, I knew, with her sharp tongue. Further tragedy ensued. Her baby boy, ten days old at the time, died; its cord was chewed by a rat while she was running around the community half crazed with jealousy and hate. This was the sixth child she had born Khamees and one little girl survives. Shareefa got her goat without the usual accompanying lecture. What she told me was making me sick. I longed for her that she might know the Saviour.

Wells came home and we had supper then went to desk work until the curfew cannon from the old fort overlooking the harbor shot off its three blasts announcing to the town that it was three o'clock.
Arabic and time for all decent citizens to be inside their own houses. Then we went to the roof where the evening drops coolness, there to study, first the day's review, then the next day's work and third the Bible passage for morning prayers. "Dear God bless this day's work here and throughout our whole Mission to thine honor and glory in Jesus' name, amen."

**Personalia**

Dr. and Mrs. Wells Thoms receive high tribute in "Qataban and Sheba," Wendell Phillips' new book in which he tells the story of his expeditions in the field of Biblical Archaeology in southern Arabia. The tribute occurs in the chapter on Unknown Oman.

Mr. John Friesema, Sr., senior partner of Friesema Bros. Printing Company, through whose courtesy *Arabia Calling* is published, died in October.

Miss Eunice Post and Mr. Douglas Begg were married just before Christmas in Bahrain. Mr. Begg is Mission and Bahrain station accountant.

The Rev. and Mrs. Anthony Luidens, parents of the Rev. Edwin Luidens of Amarah, were held up a week in Basrah by a two year rainfall that deluged southern Iraq within a two week period. They finally reached Amarah travelling by launch up the swollen Tigris.

While at sea in November, on their return to Basrah, the Rev. and Mrs. George Gosselink were notified by radiogram of the birth of Christine Joy to their daughter Ruth in India.

In their return to the Persian Gulf, Dr. and Mrs. G. H. Nykerk spent Christmas at Gibraltar. Their ship was held up two days by the Suez Canal accident, which delay required their travel from Bombay to Kodaikanal to accompany the three children to Highclere School before proceeding up the Gulf to Amarah.

Miss Allene Schmalzriedt, who received her appointment as missionary nurse in October, is studying this semester in Biblical Seminary in New York. She will sail this summer to undertake language study in Bahrain.

Members of the Mission who return to America for furlough this spring are Mrs. John Van Ess with subsequent retirement, the Rev. and Mrs. Harvey Staal, Dr. and Mrs. W. Wells Thoms and Mrs. Douglas Begg.

The Rev. and Mrs. B. D. Hakken in Baghdad were visited by the Rev. and Mrs. George Gosselink on their way from Beirut to Basrah by car in October, and by the Rev. and Mrs. Anthony Luidens on the same route by air in December.

Miss Ruth Voss graduates from Highclere School in Kodaikanal in May and will arrive with Miss Margaret Schuppe in New York on July 16.

The Rev. Harvey Staal accompanied Dr. and Mrs. Storm and party to Hofuf the latter part of December and remained for three weeks. In mid-January Dr. Donald T. Bosch entered Hassa for a brief visit on his way with the family to Muscat.
The Rev. Henry G. Bovenkerk, Treasurer of the Board, has been invited to be the Board representative at the opening of the Mylerea Memorial Hospital when the full annual meeting of the Mission is held in Kuwait next October.

Miss Lavina Hoogeveen's brother, who is with the Air Force in Tripoli, spent five days in Bahrain at Christmas time.

Mrs. G. E. De Jong underwent successful surgery in Kalamazoo in early December.

Miss Marianne Walvoord, who has been transferred to Muscat, was visited in February by Miss Margaret Schuppe with whom she lived till recently in Bahrain.

The Rev. Edwin M. Luidens and the Rev. Donald R. MacNeill have been named Charter Members of a Radio Evangelism Committee.

Miss Ruth Young of Grand Rapids, Michigan, who returned home for early furlough last July due to health considerations will not return to mission service.

Miss Lois Thoms graduates from Highelere School in May and will accompany her parents home this spring.

The Rev. George Gosselink was elected Mission Secretary to succeed Mrs. John van Ess who retires this spring. Mr. Staal was re-elected Treasurer, to be succeeded by the Rev. G. E. De Jong when he returns with Mrs. De Jong to the Gulf later this year to reside in Bahrain.

Miss Madeline Holmes, who went to Kuwait as a short termer, has been made a career member of the Mission.

Dr. Park Johnson, the Field Representative of the Presbyterian Board in the Near East, and acting Secretary of the Near East Christian Council, was welcomed as a fraternal delegate at the annual mission meeting in Muscat in October.

(Continued from page 2)

Miss Margaret Schuppe, R. N. P. O. Box 1 Medical Work
Miss Marianne Walvoord Muscat, Pers. Gulf
Miss Madeline A. Holmes Kuwait, Pers. Gulf
Mr. Robert J. Block Basrah, Iraq
Rev. and Mrs. James W. Dunham P. O. Box 1 Language Study

Add American Mission to all addresses in Arabia. Air mail service is available at twenty-five cents for each half ounce. Sea mail functions but is subject to delays; the rates are eight cents for the first ounce and four cents for each additional ounce. A special air mail sheet, stamped, may be obtained from the post office for 10c, no enclosures.

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