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Please draw checks and send remittances, or requests for information, to "THE ARABIAN MISSION," 25 East 22d Street, New York City.
Arrived here "safe and sound" to-day to spend ten days in quarantine. My voyage has been a remarkable one, both as to length and experiences. It is just 106 days ago since I left home, which, if the ten days' quarantine be added, will give the sum total of 116 days as the length of my voyage.

As to experience, the voyage has been even more remarkable, and has borne witness that our God answers prayers and guards His children. I refer to my experience in Marseilles. I wrote you in regard to the accident which took place there, but it was only recently that I learned the full details. They are as follows: It was demonstrated in court that we had fire on board the "Dorothea" all the way from Manchester to Marseilles, a distance of 1000 miles. You see, the fire started among the bales of cotton goods, which slowly smouldered away, all the while generating the gas in the coal of the neighboring hold till finally the explosion took place. When I look back on this, I do not cease thanking our God for His faithfulness over me. What would have been the result had the explosion occurred on the open sea—and the voyage through the Bay of Biscay was a rough and stormy one—I dare not imagine. But God was mindful of the many prayers which accompany me and therefore He took such good care of me.

The rest of the voyage was remarkably fine. Nothing better could be wished for. This morning as we passed the quarantine station I saw Messrs. Cantine and Zwemer and Mrs. Zwemer, who also were on the lookout for me. You can better imagine than I can describe to you the "royal salute" which bade me welcome in their midst. They leave quarantine to-morrow. Dr. Thoms and
Mr. Barny came alongside the "Dorothea" to-day and welcomed me. It did me good to see their faces and hear their voices.

As to the work awaiting me, I can as yet form no idea. After the 8th of January, 1900, life will seem more real to me. I am indeed anxious to begin my work.

This long voyage has taught me anew two invaluable lessons. First, that God answers prayer and therefore we may rely upon Him. Second, I have learned as never before the virtue of patience. These two lessons are, I believe, invaluable to a missionary, and I am most happy to have learned them by experience and so remarkably.

MUSCAT.

The Freed-Slave School at Muscat has lately claimed most of our time and interest. We have had no definite commencement season, and yet, as I write, all the larger boys have left us and only the smaller ones remain. Possibly all our friends, as well as those especially interested in the black boys, will like to know why and how they have gone, and what hopes the future holds out to them. As they themselves have almost forgotten their African names, I will use those given them by their old master, Peter Zwemer.

James, the oldest, was naturally the first to leave. The leader of the boys and deferred to by them all, he eventually considered himself too large to be governed by the rules of the school, and during the protracted illness of Mr. Barny last spring he took the opportunity of getting quite out of hand, so that he was virtually dismissed and sent to the English consulate for discipline. There, under wise treatment, with plenty of work, and the stimulus of personal responsibility, he developed into a good servant; so much so that when the consul recently left Muscat for India he took James with him, and I think will retain him permanently in his service.

Two of the others, Samuel and John, I myself placed on board H. M. S. "Sphinx," a gunboat which is permanently stationed in the Gulf. They were about fifteen years old and being very anxious to leave the school and "go to sea," I did not hesitate to accept of this opportunity, especially as I knew the officers on board and was confident that they would be well looked after and given a chance to develop into good men. I have seen them several times since and have not regretted my action.
The oldest boys having thus been disposed of, one might think the others would be contented for a year or two longer. But no, one and all were anxious to be appropriated by some one and to begin the life which had been held before them for a long time. It may be that they were tired of the restraint of the three and half years of school life. Certainly only two or three really seemed to enjoy their studies. Boylike, they all were looking forward to a change of some kind and were constantly writing me little petitions in awkward English, asking me to find them kind masters as soon as possible. There were at the same time grave difficulties in the way of carrying on the school on the same lines which rendered us not adverse to considering the advantages of its gradual extinction. The boys were outgrowing their cramped quarters in the mission house and we ourselves were finding their presence a growing discomfort. They had also outgrown their first teacher and no other suitable one could be found. Their limited number scarcely warranted the larger outlay which was called for by their individual growth, and yet there were enough of them to constantly require the presence of a missionary at all seasons of the year and to the crowding out of the other work of the station.

After a few experiments and much thought we had come to the conclusion that no promising future lay open to the lads except domestic service, and naturally we wished to place as many of them as possible in Christian families. On inquiry I found that those who were willing to take the boys into their homes wished to get control of them at once before they became too old. All the circumstances—the interests of the mission, of the boys, and those who were kind enough to receive them—thus pointed to the same action. The result has been, I consider, very satisfactory. Solomon was the first of the younger group of boys to leave the mission house. He went to Bahrein, where his anxiety to please, his cheerfulness and honesty soon endeared him to our missionaries there. He has since been followed by Alfred, while Phillip and Isaac are now on their way to Busrah. In the future letters from these stations I am sure these boys will be mentioned with approval and commendation. One of the A. M. S. missionaries from Bagdad passing by Muscat also took Peter under his care. These boys will naturally have every advantage possible, and if they do not develop into good Christian men it will be a great disappointment.
A well known merchant at the neighboring town of Bushire also applied for two boys who might develop into his private and confidential servants. It seemed a good opening and David and Joseph were sent to him. Two others have found homes in Muscat itself, one, Thomas, at the English Consulate, and George with the Sultan's physician.

Of the eighteen who were taken over from the English Government nearly four years ago, two have died, Mark as the result of a fall from the veranda of our house last summer, and Andrew during the cholera epidemic a few weeks ago. Four, Stephen, Adrian, Henry and Nathan, are still in the charge of the mission. Applications have been made for them, but as they are the youngest of the number, two of them only ten years old, it has been thought best to keep them on for the present. They will be the nucleus of another school should other slave boys be caught and brought into Muscat. But because of political restrictions none have been taken upon the high seas for a long time, and in recent conversations with English officials no hopes have been held out that present conditions will soon be changed.

Our school, experimental as it was in its beginning, has surely proved itself a success, and we may joyfully acknowledge the leading of God's providence in all its ways. As we compare the boys now with what was their condition four years ago, and then note the possibilities of their future, we can easily say that the time and strength spent in their behalf have not been in vain, and that the prayers of God's people for them have been and will be abundantly answered. We also feel that the influence of this our humble attempt within the confines of Muscat to show the love and compassion of our Master, will not be without its result upon the larger expanse of his Kingdom. We will gladly keep our friends informed of the progress of the boys, and beg that they and their best interests may still be carried to the Throne of Grace by those, who thankful for the redemption of their bodies, are looking for their fuller and complete redemption in the blood of the Lamb.

James Cantine.

BAHREIN.

Friends in America have often asked us to tell them exactly how we spend our days at Bahrein, and by way of variety in these quarterly letters, we will tell the story of one day this quarter as
a sample of the usual work at our station. If the view is too microscopic to give a broad idea of results it shows details which are, at least to some of you, interesting. We selected December seventh before it dawned, to note what a day should bring us; this day was selected for no other reason than perhaps because, (since the seventh of each month is the day for special prayer in the C. M. S. cycle for Moslem lands) we have often noticed special happenings or blessings to occur on that day. It was an ordinary, bright cool day of our mild winter; the north wind was blowing all day and at this season the weather does not hinder mission work or melt enthusiasm. We arose at about six o'clock, and while Mrs. Zwemer was dressing the children, I read to her from John's Epistle. Our reading was interrupted by an early caller, a Banian (Hindu) merchant, who came to purchase a map of Bahrein, and an Atlas he could not find at the book-shop the day before. He remained for some time and took other books with him; but as some of them were on the Hindu faith, he politely returned them afterwards. Our breakfast was next in order, and then the household, including our colporters, met in the study for morning prayer. We read Psalm 31st by turns and after brief comment, Jusef led in prayer. Already a dozen or more patients were at the doorway waiting for the "dispensary" to open. Jusef was sent with books to the weekly bazaar held on Thursdays at Suk-el-Khamis, a couple of miles distant, and Gibrail began to dress ulcers while I treated fever patients, and put eye-water into eyes more or less affected with opthalmia. One case of dysentery puzzled us and another case of total blindness received no help. In between bandaging and bottle-washing, Gibrail pressed two men into purchasing gospels; altogether eighteen people went away happier than they came. While upstairs Mrs. Zwemer put a baby to sleep and prepared a pudding not to be entrusted to Lydia, our cook; Suleiman, our Muscat boy, did his sweeping and dusting, and Nejmah prepared for the daily ordeal of addition, subtraction, sewing and John's Gospel. Lydia serves tables wholly, but her young daughter thinks she may become a prophetess.

Before ten o'clock I make a visit to the building which is in process of erection just outside the village, and which the mission leased for eight years as a residence when it became evident that purchase of property was impracticable at Bahrein. From the
builder's I hurried to make a promised call on Sheikh Jasim, the Judge of the island; books and talk about the Transvaal war made the visit tedi ous.

On the way back I stopped at the leading Hindu merchant's house to arrange for a lantern-talk that night, also an old promise to fulfill. When I reached home the doorway was blocked by a group of gazers, and within was a man lying on a bier, carried there by two hammals, and accompanied by his wife, both Persians. He had an ugly ulcer right on the knee and wanted to stay in our house until he was cured. After dressing it we took him to the mosque next door and found him a comfortable corner there.

Would you call him an in-patient? Then it was dinner time, and we sampled the pudding not to speak of mutton, egg-plant, rice and native bread. Gilrail employed the rest of his morning in rolling bandages and making some very indifferent quinine pills; but he is developing into a useful dispensary assistant, and is spiritually minded with abundance of patience. Jusef returned from his expedition having sold nothing but spoken with many and left a few tracts in good hands. During the afternoon one of our helpers sat in the shop and the other bargained for donkeys to go on a more extensive tour on the morrow. What Elias, the colporter, did on December seventh is not yet evident, for he was and is still absent on the pirate coast with Bibles and books.

After noonday prayers two more patients came. A baby ten days old was brought in its mother's arms to "the Christian lady." The tiny creature was suffering from abscesses on its back; soothing, dressing, a flannel garment, and kind words—then the mother of this small bit of humanity, three pounds of misery, went her way.

A pearl merchant followed to have his finger dressed. Then Mrs. Zwemer went out on an afternoon excursion, Suleiman carrying a bundle of garments made by the Summer Sewing Guild. Two dozen baby garments each found an occupant, and the cry was for more from many a hut where the wind was equally cold. She called on some of the better class, and in the house of H—had a talk with ten women about the Third Commandment, and answered all sorts of questions about our ways of living and our way of worship. At home I had a daily Arabic lesson with Jusef for mutual profit; we were reading the fourth chapter of Ecclesiastes; he asks questions on exegesis, and when I cannot satisfy
him I can retaliate by questions on Arabic grammar or unusual roots. I also played the music-box, given by an Arab Sheikh, for Katharina, and walked the floor with Bessie. Nejmah came to learn a hymn, and there was time for some reading. Evening tea, prayers, good-night to the four brown and the two white bairns and then off for the lantern-talk. A white sheet in the largest upper room on the island, seventy views and a half-English, half-Arabic explanation to suit the audience,—we put out the light and go home. The day is done. Such is a glimpse of our daily round and common task. "Come over and help us." S. M. Zwemer.

**BUSRAH.**

We arrived on the field a year ago, on January 20th, and were introduced to the study of Arabic, "the language of the angels." And I have thought sometimes since that if they spoke it grammatically I should have to be content with the music of the harps, for I should not understand the songs. At other times I have felt a little encouraged when I have understood a sermon or conversation fairly well, or have succeeded in making myself understood, but as the time for the examination draws near I am afraid I am getting a little discouraged again.

I like to talk to the servants as a drill in speaking and understanding the common-spoken language. The other day, as one of them was walking to the bazaar with me, we were speaking of the evils in the world in its different forms and he said he had been in the mission house five years and had watched everything that came into the house and that went out of it and all that we did, and had only found one thing that was evil, and that was we ate *khangeer* (pork). Although Paul said: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and he did not exclude missionaries, this was an encouraging testimony coming, as it did, from a Moslem who had watched that he might find offence in us.

As we were going out one night in a bellum, we saw a star fall, and I asked one of the bellumgees, or boatmen, what caused it, and he told me that the devil listened at the door of heaven and the angels threw hot stones at him to drive him away. He said he had once seen one that fell near Baghdad and asked me if I had not seen this in America. The Koran is accountable for this story as it is for many others quite as absurd.
When cholera broke out in Busrah, ten days' quarantine was put on between Busrah and Baghdad which was very inconvenient, as passengers were compelled to spend ten days in a mat house below Baghdad on the desert. Cholera died out in Busrah, but a few cases were reported in Amara. Later it was reported that quarantine was lifted and the river was free, so Dr. Worrall went up to Amara, expecting to stay a couple of days and return on the next boat, but just after he landed an order came from Constantinople to open the river except Amara and allow no communication with that place, and a cordon of soldiers was sent to prevent anyone leaving or entering the city, so Dr. Worrall is practically a prisoner there. I am carrying on the dispensary work here in his absence.

We had expected to be in Bahrein this quarter, but, owing to opposition to the work, especially from the religious sheikh of the island, a house could not be secured for us, so of course we have remained here. During the quarter I visited Bahrein to help work out the house problem. I staid four weeks, and we tried by every means we could think of to secure two houses or one large one, as Mr. Zwemer's lease soon expired and they had refused to renew it. When I returned the situation did not seem much clearer. A number were ready to rent to us, or even build new houses for us, if we would get written permission from the sheikh, but this was not obtainable. However, we felt that it was the Lord's work and if He wanted us to work in Bahrein and Mr. Zwemer's work to continue, He would secure a house for us if we only had faith. And very recently a man whom we had not thought of offered to rent a house and build extra rooms for us, and Mr. Zwemer has signed a contract for the house for a term of eight years and he is building the extra rooms, so we hope to move there in April. This offer, coming from an entirely unsolicited source, without interference or aid from the English Consul or other authority, after we had exhausted our resources, reminds us of the words of the Psalmist: "They are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He bringeth them out of their distresses."

SHARON J. THOMS, M.D.

The prominent characteristic of this Quarter has been the many restrictions that we have had to labor under. Just as we
were sending our last reports the cholera made its appearance in
Busrah. Happily the out-break was not serious and
we hoped that we should escape with the scare alone
without any serious consequences. But most unfor-
tunately for our work, we have been hampered in our movements
by the most irksome regulations, and sometimes lack of regulations,
as to quarantine. At first the authorities tried to hide the pres-
ence of the dread scourge, but when this was no longer possible,
all communication with Busrah was forbidden. For about ten
days no one could leave or enter the city, and when finally the re-
quise order came from Constantinople, quarantine was arranged
and a station established at a place where the prominent things
were the desert, a few lonely brick-kilns and a lack of accom-
modation and provisions. Our colporteur having returned from
Nasariyeh lost several weeks in waiting and then finally was com-
pelled to pass the ten days of quarantine before he could return to
his post. Notwithstanding the strict regulations the cholera
spread into the region north of Busrah, so that while the city has
been declared free, the region in which our stations are situated
is still under quarantine and communication with the colporters
is very difficult. The Turkish post has never had much of a re-
cord for speed, but recently a letter from Nasariyeh required
twenty-three days to travel a distance of about two hundred miles.
Just at present Amara is surrounded by a cordon of soldiers, so
that all communication with that place is stopped. Under such
conditions no tours have been possible and it is no wonder that
sales have been small. In making out the report for the British
and Foreign Bible Society the result showed a slight decrease in
the sales of the Scriptures from last year. The decrease is easily
explained by the conditions mentioned and by the fact that the
force of colporters was reduced since the beginning of the year
from five to three. As the cholera seems so persistent, continuing
even in this comparatively cold weather, there is a danger of a
more severe visit when the weather gets warmer. Let us hope
and pray that the Lord will preserve us from this, and that the
way may soon be opened for His messengers of peace to run upon.

In Busrah itself the regular work has been going on as usual.
After the cessation of the very high temperature, English Services
were begun, and the opportunity of public worship offered to the
resident community. The attendance has not been

very encouraging, with the exception of the last few
Sundays, when it has been good. Our land-lord has not kept his many promises to repair a room suitable for a chapel, and we are still compelled to use one of our own rooms for that purpose. We trust that this lack will soon be supplied.

The service with the colporters also goes on regularly as also the short services with the patients each morning before the Doctor begins to treat them, and the Word is generally gladly heard. The assistance of the colporters is to be acknowledged in these services, as I still find an Arabic address a day too much for me. It is interesting, in the morning services, with the patients who are mostly poor Moslems, to hear the choruses of approving exclamations, especially when we speak of the ethical principles of Christianity. There is a silence which does not give consent when the claims of the Prophet-King are presented, but the prayer for God's blessing on the Doctor's work for the healing of the sick usually puts all in an agreeable mood.

The sales from the book-shop have been good for the quarter, notably in educational books; perhaps over seventy per cent. of the books sold from the shop have been such. While increased sales of the Scriptures are more welcome, this result is also pleasing. These books are from the depository of the American Press (Presbyterian) at Beirut, and are, of course, of a good character. As true science has ever been the handmaid of religion, these educational books mean so much light amidst an Egyptian darkness of ignorance. Quite a number of the books have been English primers and readers which, though not strictly religious, are certainly moral, and of a morality founded on Christianity, and may be regarded as leaven which must eventually work to the raising of the lump. The American Press referred to is certainly doing a good work in furnishing a healthy, Christian Arabic literature, and deserves to be supported by all friends of Christian progress among Arabic-speaking people.

There are in Busrah several schools where the English language is taught. Hitherto our Mission force has been too small to warrant us even to think of a school. But now that our stations are beginning to be properly manned we must soon begin to settle the question of this line of activity. The desire for a knowledge of the English must be regarded as a sign of the times among us. It certainly shows the preponderance of the English
influence in these regions. The schools referred to are only for Jews and Chaldean Christians, and the knowledge is sought chiefly for commercial reasons, but it is a beginning and it does not take much of a prophet to foretell the future.

Our sister mission at Baghdad (C. M. S.) is about to receive its much needed re-enforcements. Dr. H. M. Sutton and party are now in Busrah, and we have the pleasure of entertaining one of the party. They are meeting with unexpected hindrances in reaching their station because of the quarantine. The members of our own Mission have just come from the quarantine station, and we are assembled for the annual Mission Meeting. Our latest accession to the force, Mr. H. J. Wiersum, arrived yesterday, and will be with us soon.

Fred. J. Barny.
N. B.—The Arabian Mission depends for its support and the extension of its work, not on the treasury of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Reformed Church in America, though under its care and administration, but upon contributions specifically made for this purpose. The churches, societies and individuals subscribing are not confined to the Reformed Church. Members of other denominations are among its supporters and its missionaries. Regular gifts and special donations are invited from all who are interested in Mission work in Arabia. Regular contributors will receive quarterly letters and annual reports, without application. All contributions, or applications for literature or information, should be sent to "THE ARABIAN MISSION," 25 East 22d Street, New York.