The Arabian Mission

Field Report

Number Twenty

October 1 to December 31, 1896
THE ARABIAN MISSION.

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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.
After being unrepresented in the Quarterly Field Reports for nearly two years, it is a pleasure once more to write about current happenings in Busrah and vicinity. A long furlough home is enjoyable in anticipation and reality, yet it sometimes seems like a rest by the wayside rather than actual progress.

The date of my arrival at Busrah was November 15th. It would have been a month earlier but for tedious and unavoidable delays on the way. Twelve weeks from New York was the record of my diary on the day I landed at the mission house.

While waiting for my steamer at Karachi, India, I quite unexpectedly met my associate, Rev. P. J. Zwemer, and had a pleasant visit with him before we separated, he to take a furlough up on the hills, and I on my way to the Persian Gulf. Only a passing glimpse was had of Muscat during the few hours we stopped to discharge cargo, but enough to show me that new departures had been made in missionary effort, which were meeting with gratifying success. The freed-slave school has doubtless been well written about by the missionary in charge, and I will only record my pleasure in seeing the boys and in noting the progress already made. Our boat did not stop at Bahrein, and a visit to that station may be embodied in next quarter's letter.

At Busrah the disappointment which I had felt all the journey through, in returning without the needed clerical and medical reinforcements, was somewhat lessened by the realization that the missionary force was still larger by two than when I left. The welcome I received from Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Zwemer was inspiring, and the results of their joint efforts, already in evidence, were most gratifying. The medical work also, under our new doctor, was more developed than I had ever seen it. That religious services could be carried on in the dispensary for so long a time without objection from the government was a surprise. Except
when other duties have prevented, I have generally, myself, conducted these five or ten minutes of reading and explanation followed with prayer, and I can testify to their value, both as emphasizing the religious bearing of our medical work, and as an opportunity for scattering the good seed, some of which perchance may take root.

Another evidence of growth—the outstation at Amara—needing some attention, I spent a few days there in the month of December. Amara is only twenty-four hours journey up the Tigris, provided the navigation is good, which it usually is not. This time I arrived about ten o'clock at night—not a very good time at which to settle oneself in a strange town, but an empty room in a "khan" was found, and after hiring a broad bench on which to spread my bed, I took possession at a rental of about ten cents a day. It is surprising how comfortable one can be for a short time with very little in the way of luxuries. The main thing, for me at least, is to have plenty of bedding to ensure a good night's rest. For food, one learns to eat what other people do, and almost anything is welcome as a change. However, the colporteur in charge, our good Murad, looked after my needs, and I was enabled, in a very pleasant way, to get a good idea of the town and the prospects for our work. We have a fine little Bible shop there and a capable man in charge, but the population is not very large, and there are few neighboring villages, so I do not know that our book sales will be very large. However, it is a "watch-tower" for the plain, and already we know that men have listened to the voice therefrom.

One of the greatest of blessings which come to the lot of missionaries has lately been ours, namely, witnessing the ascent of a soul out of darkness into the light of peace and joy of service. The convert, already mentioned in our letters, has been an almost daily visitor at our house. Delighting in the reading of the Word, earnest in prayer, and zealous for the Kingdom, he has been a great comfort to us. His escape from all interference seems inexplicable to us, except it be that his position as a petty officer in the Turkish service protects him to some extent. Some day, doubtless, the storm will break upon him, and we must pray that his faith fail not. He has asked for baptism, but is first to receive more instruction, and possibly complete his term of service in the army. He has already spoken to several of his comrades about the claims of Christ, and we trust it may be God's purpose to use him mightily
in His service. His greatest drawback now is his wife, who, as are most Mohammedan women, is very much prejudiced against new religious ideas, and now, since Mrs. Zwemer's departure, we have no way of reaching her.

Shortly after my arrival, our colporteurs returned from a successful tour up the valley of the Euphrates. As I myself had been over this ground some three years ago, I could appreciate the greater degree of toleration, with its consequence of increased book sales, which now prevails. Most probably this toleration does not mean so much a change of heart among local officials as that we have wearied them by our systematic and continuous efforts. And so do we believe that a like importunity, world-wise and heaven-dependent, will give to the Lord's work any of the places in Arabia upon which we, as missionaries, "have placed the soles of our feet." May our friends in America echo the prayer, "Only be strong and of a good courage."

James Cantine.

MEDICAL REPORT.

Toward the close of the third quarter it became necessary that Bahrein Station should be visited. It seemed best that I should make the visit, going to Muscat at the same time, in order to see the slave boys.

I left Busrah September 17th, reaching Bahrein September 21st. The "Mission House" here was found to be still needing the finishing touches, and so the owner and builder were urged to complete same, so that the house should be ready for Rev. S. M. Zwemer and wife at the time of the return of Rev. James Cantine to Busrah. After treating all patients who came during my two weeks stay, I left the island October 4th, reaching Muscat on the 7th.

Reaching the house occupied by the missionary and slave-school, I was greatly pleased to find the house in a much better locality than the one occupied when I came up in April, 1895. Situated on the easterly side of a hill, the house becomes shady quite early in the afternoon, so that it is for Muscat about the coolest spot. From its being so situated, also, the rain water washes down, and does not have an opportunity to be stagnant, causing disease or stench.

During my former visit I became quite familiar with Muscat, both within and without the walls, and consider this location to be
one of the healthy spots of the place. Except for the uncertainty of tenure, I should consider this to be a very good spot for a permanent location from the point of healthfulness. I examined the boys and found them, with one exception, to be in good physical condition. The exception was rapidly gaining at the time. I had no fear but what in time, and with the good care he was receiving from Rev. P. J. Zwemer, he would probably make a good recovery. After spending the night with Mr. Zwemer, I continued my journey to Bombay, reaching there October 13th, 1896. After having had necessary dental work done, and purchasing such drugs and instruments as had to be examined before purchasing, I embraced an opportunity which presented itself of returning to Busrah as ship's surgeon. After a thirteen days' stay in the place, I left Bombay and reached the Busrah Mission House November 21st, having had a fortnight's journey and a detention of ten days in quarantine.

During my absence from Busrah the dispensary was kept open and patients treated by Rev. S. M. Zwemer and wife, who reported on my return a record of 477 treatments.

Since my return, the dispensary has been open each day, and with very few exceptions the patients have heard each morning the reading of Scripture and prayer.

There have been no important operations during this quarter, although quite a number of so-called "minor operations" have been successfully performed. The medical work has kept on with the same history of rheumatics, oedemas, fevers, eyes, ears, etc. Yet with it all the best thing is, "God is witnessed."

The following is a summary of the work during the quarter, including treatments by Rev. S. M. Zwemer and wife:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Moslem</th>
<th>Christians</th>
<th>Jews and others</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>661</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>478</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>880</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
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<td>Eye</td>
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<tr>
<td>606</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>880</td>
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H. R. L. Worrall, M.D.

BAHREIN.

Mindful of God's word in Exodus, "Thou shalt not raise a false report," it is necessary that we begin the account of work at this station in a minor key. Not only were we delayed in coming to the station after so long an absence, but we did not find matters in such a condition as we had hoped. Ibrahim Saeed had decided to leave our mission, and his dismissal was attended with trouble. A
new colporteur to take his place was not found until December 10th, when Daniel came from Busrah. Although, in our absence, the dispensary was open, and some books and Scriptures were sold, neither in quality or quantity was the work what it ought to have been. Even the landlord of our house had delayed putting in windows and plastering until we landed on the islands. All this together made it necessary to reverse Solomon's missionary program: "Prepare thy work without and make it fit for thyself in the field and afterwards build thine house."

A week after our arrival the new mission house began to look homelike, and our doors were open to those that came.

The book-shop in the bazaar was rearranged, and the old work of witness continued. Among the interesting visitors to the shop was a Punjanbi derweesh who had received an English education at Lahore, and came to buy an Arabic primer. He had discarded his veneer of learning and taken up the pilgrim-staff, to wander and gossip the wide Moslem world with his tin-basket and tangled hair. Another frequent visitor was a pilot from Lingah, on the Persian coast, who understood logarithms, learned the English alphabet at our shop, and bargained for an Arabic atlas. The sale of Scriptures increased as soon as Daniel arrived, and the accompanying table gives the result for three months.

We can especially note the sale and distribution freely of several controversial books, and many copies of the little tract printed by our mission at Muscat. There is less prejudice against the words gospel and Son of God than formerly, and we enjoy entire freedom in preaching Christ.

Mrs. Zwemer writes in regard to her work as follows:

"At the end of this quarter we thank God and take courage for many open doors, although the pathway has not been altogether smooth. Our work is necessarily uphill, and therefore we must not expect level roads and easy traveling. The two months of this quarter, spent in Busrah, were chiefly busy with dispensary work, as our medical missionary, Dr. Worrall, was away. Many women came and heard the Word preached. A few houses were visited by me, and one village where I read the Gospel and sold five portions to the women. The wife of the soldier inquirer came to our house, and I visited her several times. She is inclined to follow her husband in his desire for Christ, and, as she has been a devout Muslim, so we earnestly pray that when the light is kindled in her soul she will be an earnest Christian. I have been in Bah-

rein a month, and have done a little work. There is no regular dispensary, but sick people find their way here every day, and we do what we can for them. Last week we visited a large village about two miles from here called Jufair. Mr. Zwemer interested the men, and I went around to another corner of the village and gathered the women who came out of their date-leaf huts in numbers, about thirty in all. Their curiosity was intense, never having seen other than Arab women before, and my dress is exciting to them. I showed them a Gospel, and read part of a chapter, and then repeated the Lord’s Prayer. They listened attentively, and said the words were good. They begged me to come again and bring medicine. There are many many villages like this, but where are the workers? There are two of us here, yet what are we among so many? The other day I was invited to visit the harem of one of the rich pearl merchants. About a score of women were gathered to see me. After reaching the limit of my conversation, showing them some pictures and the Gospel, I arose to go. But I was not allowed to, for they had prepared a large dinner. On Christmas Day they returned my visit, and I had a busy time supplying tea and refreshments. Then we had music. I played a Christmas hymn on the violin, which pleased them, and, as they have no ear for time or tune, my indifferent performance did not jar them. I read the second chapter of St. Luke. It was the first any of them had ever heard of the Gospel. Other houses, too, are open. I have been to the Kadhi’s, where there are a great many women pleased to see me. They know nothing of my message of peace, and of sin forgiven. Pray for the conviction of sin by the Holy Ghost, then they will realize their need of a Saviour.”

Except for these visits among the villages, there has been no extensive touring from this station during the quarter. Just as we write this report, we are preparing to cross over to the mainland and once more visit Kateef. Provided with proper passports we ought to meet with a more cordial reception than last time; and yet, in the present state of affairs, the Turks guard every door into their tottering empire with most jealous care.

Our study of Arabic for this quarter has been of such a practical nature, at such close quarters, and so inevitable, that dictionaries and grammars have been shamefully neglected. Mrs. Zwemer passed her first language examination at Busrah in November.

S. M. Zwemer.
**MU SC A T.**

As there were no new departures in our work, our report for this quarter must necessarily be brief. We desire to note specially the fidelity of our colporteur, Jusef Micha, who, in spite of many difficulties and serious illness, was faithful in his work, doing what he could, not only in the selling of Scriptures, but also in his personal witness among a fanatical people.

A tour was made to Ruë, a village we were unable to reach in our inland tour last summer.

The eighteen rescued slave boys in our charge have made real and encouraging progress in every way. Not only was their progress month by month in the primary branches of English very satisfactory, but it has become more evident that their consciences are awakening to ideas of right and wrong, and their minds more susceptible to religious teaching.

Cases of theft and dishonesty were less frequent, and many begin to realize the opportunity of the new life open before them.

We were glad to give their efficient teacher, Mr. S. M. David, promise of permanent employment after a three months' trial, and he will now move his family from Karachi to Muscat, and become one of the permanent assistants of our Mission.

In November I began a three months' vacation in India, partly necessitated by the prolonged hot season.

P. J. ZWEMER.

**BOOK SALES, FOURTH QUARTER, 1896.**

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<td>160</td>
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