THE ARABIAN MISSION.

FIELD REPORTS.

Number One, January 1st, to April 1st, 1892.

Number Two, April 1st to July 1st, 1892.

Letter from Rev. S. M. Zwemer.
THE ARABIAN MISSION.

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JANUARY 1st to APRIL 1, 1892.

According to request, and in addition to general letters of information from the missionaries, a quarterly report is herewith submitted by the Treasurer and Secretary of the Mission in the field. The fact that the missionaries were at Busrah together until Feb. 22d, and that Dr. Riggs did not arrive until the end of this quarter, accounts for the brevity of the present report. Now that the forces of the Mission are increasing and concentrated, we hope to have more material for a following statement.

EVANGELISTIC WORK AND TOURING.

Soon after Mr. Cantine's arrival at Busrah, in August, 1891, Sunday services in English were begun for the European residents and those employed in the shipping at Busrah, both of which classes were hitherto without any gospel ministration. Owing, however, to want of a suitable place of meeting and other reasons, these services could not be held every Sabbath. From Sept. 1st to April 1st, fourteen services were held on board of steamships and men-of-war, and also in private houses. The missionaries have also visited many of the merchant steamers that come to Busrah and spoken with the crews or distributed literature. No distinctly evangelistic tours have yet been made from Busrah into the regions beyond. Mr. Cantine, however, visited Bagdad and Mohammerah on behalf of the Mission in October last, and Mr. Zwemer went to Bagdad in March to engage a colporteur for Bible work and purchase a stock of Bibles. During January Mr. Zwemer accompanied Rev. Mr. Gardner of the Keith Falconer Mission on an evangelistic tour from Sheikh Othman into the interior as far as Mizamir. The Mission hopes to
make tours up the Euphrates, Tigris and Karun rivers, as well as into the Nejd, as soon as practicable.

Since his arrival at Busrah in December, 1891, Kamil Abd El Messia has been living in a small hired house in one of the Moslem quarters of the city. In addition to his work, as our teacher in Arabic, he reports that, on an average, five Moslems have visited him daily, two-thirds of whom are Sunnites (mostly Turkish Custom House employes and Arabs) and the rest Shiites (Persian Arabs). He estimates that during the past quarter he has spoken with more than one hundred different people at his house. One Jew is a regular visitor, and there are eleven Moslems, who, though not yet to be considered inquirers, are his warm friends and willing to listen to religious conversation. One of them, a Shiite, though he cannot read, bought an Arabic Bible of Kamil and tells him that one of the women of his harem reads to the inmates of his house from this book every night.

When it has become evident in how far boldness is the part of wisdom, as regards the more open presentation of the gospel in the coffee shops, etc., Kamil will doubtless have more to report.

**BIBLE AND COLPORTEUR WORK.**

Mr. Cantine, who, by mutual consent, has the superintendence of this department, reports as follows: "Our Bible work during the past quarter naturally divides itself into two parts—that done by ourselves, as the opportunity presents itself, and that by regularly-employed colporteurs. The first is of too diffuse a nature to be accurately summarized. Perhaps all that can be said is that during the past three months about eighty Bibles or portions of Scripture have been given away or sold in Busrah and vicinity. With many of these a few words have, perhaps, prepared the way for an intelligent and earnest search for the way of Life. It is only within a few days that salaried colporteurs have been employed by the Mission. On March 16th Mr. Zwemer brought with him from Bagdad two men, Salome Antoon and Elias Gergis, who have been taken on trial for three months. A search for a suitable Bible depot, and other things incident to beginning a work of this kind, have employed much of their time. Their report, given March 31st, states that 46 books have been sold, to
the value of $28\frac{1}{2}$ Krans. These were mostly in Arabic, although other languages are included.

"The fact that our own arrangements, as regards our place of residence in Busrah have not been perfected, has prevented us from choosing a permanent location for a Bible depot. Such a depot, with at least two colporteurs, is a necessity for the future. It is not thought desirable that a man should be sent out alone on a long journey, such as we trust will be undertaken in the near future by our colporteurs. Perhaps a room can be fitted up in the house in which we live to be used as a store-room for Bibles, etc., but eventually a shop must be opened in the bazaar itself. The estimated cost for a Bible depot and two colporteurs for a year is £100. Of this amount the British and Foreign Bible Society will pay £50. By this arrangement all the work is directly in our hands and we have the privilege of using these colporteurs and the Bible depot for such Mission purposes as will not conflict with Bible work. For example, we intend to sell a number of educational and religious books, other than the Bible. During the next three months we hope to give this department of Mission work a thorough trial, expecting that, as in other countries, it will justify itself, not alone by direct results, but also in preparing the way for other means of reaching the people."

**MEDICAL WORK.**

Dr. C. E. Riggs arrived at Busrah on March 20th, and has begun to study Arabic, with Kamil as his teacher. Although technically, according to Turkish law, a medical certificate from Constantinople is necessary to enable him to treat patients who are Turkish subjects, yet the Mission has decided to open a dispensary for free treatment immediately, because of the precedent in the similar case of Dr. Marcus Eustace, and while pending interference or the obtaining of such certificate without the examination at Constantinople.

The Mission dispensary was opened on Monday, March 28th, and up to date Dr. Riggs reports a total attendance of twenty patients.

**RECOMMENDATIONS.**

In accordance with the above, and in addition to the estimated
outlay on the general expense account, as given in the Treasurer's report for this quarter, we recommend the following as being desirable for the establishment and extension of our work beyond Busrah:

(i.) That the Mission be authorized to purchase a "Meheleh," or native river boat, to be used for touring up the rivers, and as a floating dispensary while at Busrah it would serve as temporary quarters for colporteurs, etc.

The Meheleh is a native sailing-craft about 35 feet in length and 12 feet in breadth, and having a small cabin under the poop-deck. The cabin should be constructed to suit Mission purposes. A Meheleh can be obtained (second-hand) for about $1,200, and newly-built for about $2,000.

(2.) That as soon as necessary the Mission be authorized to purchase a strong, medium-sized army tent for overland journeys and touring into the Nejd. The price of such a tent at Bombay is between $40 and $60.

JAMES CANTINE, Treasurer.
S. M. ZWEMER, Secretary.
C. E. RIGGS, M. D.

Busrah, April 1st, 1892.
Second Quarterly Report, 1892.

APRIL 1st to JUNE 30.

TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE ARABIAN MISSION, REV. J. P. SEARLE, Secretary:

During the past three months our work has suffered on account of the sickness at different times of some of our native helpers. Except for the loss of Kamil Abd El Messia all of us have been spared in health, in spite of the exceptionally unhealthy season and the heat. All of the Mission force continued at Busrah, or vicinity, except Jakoob Johann, who went on a month's leave to Bagdad with his wife and child, to recuperate from fever, which attacked them all.

EVANGELISTIC WORK AND TOURING.

English services on the Sabbath were not carried on as regularly as before, because of the absence of some Europeans, want of interest in those that remained, and lack of a proper place for such services. Every steamship in harbor was visited, however, and Christian papers and literature distributed. Ten Sunday preaching services were held on various steamships, and two funeral services were conducted by the missionaries. This work, although not in direct line of our efforts, is very necessary, and we believe, also, not without result in other directions. Encouraging letters relating to this part of our work have been received from Agnes Weston, "the sailor's friend," and from the Sailors' Missionary Society. We would call the attention of the Board and our subscribers in America to the great usefulness of Christian and scientific literature for this branch of our work.

Regular Arabic Bible readings have been held each Sabbath morning during the quarter for the study of the Word and mutual prayer, at which, as at our morning prayers in Arabic, all our native helpers were present. Oftentimes we have had others, even
Moslems, worship with us, but it has not been thought wise, as yet, to hold regular Arabic preaching service.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was administered on board H. M. S. "Brisk" on May 1st, and on the evening of the same day again, in Arabic, at the Mission house. Before the service Um Thabit, the wife of Jakoob Johann, received baptism on confession of her faith. Then six of us, in all, sat down to the Lord's table; it was a day long to be remembered in the annals of the Mission. During the past quarter we were obliged to move from our former residence a mile further up the creek, and right into the midst of the native quarter. The missionaries have found access to several Moslem families in their houses, and both in our frequent visits there and our daily intercourse with Moslems, and to those who come to us, we have tried to make plain the way of life. Of those whom we have met more than once many have shown an earnest, inquiring spirit. Among the lower classes the ignorance in regard to Christ and Christianity is unimaginable.

Two Shiah Moslems can be counted as true inquirers; one, indeed, is nigh unto the kingdom, and has repeatedly asked for our prayers.

Kamil continued his work in the same way as he reported for the previous quarter. But because his papers are not in our hands we cannot give a detailed summary of the number of Moslems, etc., that came to see him.

Tours have been made three times to Mohammerah and three times to Maghil. Both places have the name of being very fanatical and are inhabited mostly by Shiah Arabs. Maghil was in former years the site of the English Residency, and is four miles up the river. It consists of a large native village, a European cemetery plot, and the dry dock, and compound of Lynch, Bros. & Co. On our first visit, when we went together with Jakoob Johann, there were some signs of intolerance, and, with difficulty, they were persuaded to listen to our message. On a subsequent visit, May 28th, when Mr. Zwemer went with Kamil Abd El Messia, they spoke with a company of forty, under a large acacia tree by the riverside, for more than two hours. Much interest was shown, and there was a far different spirit than on the first visit. A couple of gospels were sold, and we were invited to-
come again. Kamil was sent on a third tour, June 3d, and went alone, hoping to find access to their houses as a guest. Although they saw and heard him gladly he was yet forced to sleep out in his boat, and was even refused food for money—such is their ignorant prejudice at times. Mohammerah is a large town in Persian territory, about twenty miles down the Shatt El Arab. Besides the journey of our two colporteurs, on April 18th, this Persian-Arabic settlement was visited twice by us during the quarter, in company with Jakoob.

The interesting sect called the Sabeans, or Disciples of St. John the Baptist, are largely settled at Mohammerah, engaged in silver work. They were specially pleased with our visits, and may prove willing to hear the gospel in all its fullness and power. The sect holds very peculiar views, and has books purporting to be revelations to Adam, in the Syriac language.

Dr. C. E. Riggs also visited Maghil and Mohammerah several times to see patients. The intended journey up the Karun River, as far as Shuster, was not made during this quarter, because of the increasing heat and the request made to Dr. Riggs by the English Consul not to leave Busrah during the present unhealthy season and the rumors of cholera.

_BIBLE AND COLPORTEUR WORK._

In regard to this work Rev. Mr. Cantine reports as follows:

Our Bible work during the past three months, while not reaching to our expectations, has yet been in a measure successful and offers us some data on which to base our hopes and efforts for the future.

During April and May we had two colporteurs in our employ, such time as they were not on the road being occupied in street-selling in Busrah and all the surrounding villages.

No very extended tours were undertaken. The villages south from Busrah, along the river, and one or two inland, were visited, with varied success. In some cases the colporteurs were not allowed to sell at all; in others they were not interfered with. But a small proportion of the people, outside of the large towns, can read, and many, who can, prefer books of tales, rather than the Word of God. It also frequently happens that after books are
bought and paid for, that their "Scribes and Pharisees" will compel their return. Our Bible shop, which has been open for about a month, has not been actually interfered with by the Turkish authorities, though many threats have been made.

We have just received a number of books from Beyrout from the American Mission Press, both religious and educational, which we hope to sell also. There seems to be quite a demand for these; we think their sale will not interfere with, but probably help, that of our Bibles. During the past quarter there have been over a hundred Scriptures and portions sold, mostly being in Arabic, and about the same number of tracts, sermons, etc. The value of all sales for April and June was $20.25. We trust our future work in this line will grow, both in quality and quantity.

**MEDICAL WORK.**

Dr. C. E. Riggs presents the following summary of his work during the quarter:

The Mission Dispensary, which was opened on March 26th, remained open until closed voluntarily by the Mission. During the month that the Dispensary remained open about 550 patients received free medical or surgical advice and treatment. One death occurred. Since the Dispensary was closed medical work has been carried on more or less openly, especially among Persian subjects, by visiting patients at their residences, etc. Since the Dispensary was closed, from April 28th until June 30th, about 980 patients were attended. Three deaths occurred. Fevers constituted about 50 per cent. of the cases, the remainder including nearly all diseases. The total of 256 rupees was received as gifts from native patients.

**LANGUAGE.**

The study of the language to which we had hoped to give a large part of our time has been somewhat hindered by sickness and the trouble incident to finding and moving into another house. Since Kamil's death we are without a qualified teacher.

We are preparing a scheme for Arabic study for the use of missionaries of the Arabic Mission, based on those in use in the American Missions of Syria and Egypt, but adapted more closely
to the needs of Arabia. Both Kamil and Jakoob were studying the Arabic Bible and the outlines of Theology under our direction during the quarter.

**DEATH OF KAMIL ABD EL MESSIA.**

The Board of Trustees are already informed of this severe loss to our work. No official communication has yet been received from the English Consulate in reply to our letters anent Kamil's death and burial, a copy of which was sent to Rev. Searle, Secretary. We have, however, received back all the Mission books and property which were in Kamil's charge, through the Consulate. What the further outcome of our appeal will be is uncertain. Meanwhile, the new Wali, or Governor of Busrah, who came two weeks ago, has, of his own accord, or through the misrepresentations and efforts of Moslem Ulema, turned his attention to and against our work. A letter was sent to the British Consulate protesting against our remaining and working in Busrah on untenable grounds. This letter, which contained only mistakes and misstatements, was replied to by the English Consulate entirely to our satisfaction.

By the enforcement of the laws relating to medical practice, which were overlooked by the former Wali, Dr. Riggs has recently been compelled to confine his services to Persian and English subjects. Our Bible depot, too, has not escaped their eye of envy and opposition.

None of these things move us, except with devout gratitude that we can see them all working together for the glory of Christ's name and kingdom. Many Moslems, and nearly all others in Busrah, understand the nature, purpose and motive of our efforts, and do not at all approve of Turkish interference. Our Mission policy has hitherto been to hold back in nothing from an open confession of Christ by word and work, and to ask the same of our native assistants. Whatever may be wise or politic in other fields, we firmly believe it impossible to preach the gospel to Moslems in Arabia in any other way than openly and without subterfuge or secrecy, whatever may be the result to ourselves. In view of our own weakness and the opportunities and promises that this field holds out to us we ask for your continued and fervent prayers.
RECOMMENDATIONS.

1. By reason of the fact that the school opened in Busrah by the Anglo-Jewish Association during the past year has been closed on account of a scandal, there is now an opportunity to open a Mission school, while there is no other English school in Busrah. The missionaries would, therefore, recommend that they be authorized to take steps toward obtaining a firman, or permit, for an English and Arabic Christian school as soon as possible, and that they be also authorized to draw on the general account for the primary expenses of such a school as may seem most suitable, to the extent of $—.

2. Extended touring is doubtless one of the best methods for Mission work in a land like Arabia. Such touring is only practicable during the cool season, from October to April, and although the Nejd, from Busrah southward, is yet largely unknown, we have reason to believe from the accounts of Palgrave, Doughty, Vanden Berg and Lady Ann Blunt, that the interior of Arabia is not inaccessible. Still, from the nature of the country and its people and the uncertainty of much else, it would be impossible to limit such an extended journey inland, as to time or route.

All the Nejd country, with its populous capital and independent government, the Great Nefud, with its Bedouin tribes, and the Oman hill-country, have never been visited by a missionary, and their peoples, from all accounts, are not so fanatical that such a journey should not be attempted. Therefore, we recommend that, in accordance with our wishes and plans, S. M. Zwemer be sent on a tour inland for such a time and by such a route as shall be judged safest and best by the Mission at Busrah. Not ignorant of the uncertainties and dangers of such an extended tour we are also convinced of its utility and desirability as an attempt into “Regions Beyond,” in order to prepare the way for colporteurs and Bible work, and open up Arabia to the gospel.

Respectfully submitted,

JAMES CANTINE, Treasurer,
S. M. ZWEMER, F’ld Secretary.
C. F. RIGGS, M. D.

Busrah, July 5th, 1892.
LETTER FROM S. M. ZWEMER.

BUSHRA, Arabia, June 29, 1892.

To the Board of Trustees, Rev. J. P. Searle, Treasurer:

Dear Brother: In behalf of the Mission here I have very sad news to write to you. Kamil Abd El Messia, our first native helper, and the right hand of our work, passed to his rest on the evening of June 24th. He had been sick only two days and died from fever and a sort of cholera or dysentery. Three days before his death he came to Arabic morning prayers as usual. The same day Dr. Riggs visited him and found him suffering with fever. As all of us were accustomed to that, we were not alarmed. The following day Dr. Riggs himself did not feel well, and so sent Kamil medicine, etc., by us. Kamil occupied rooms about two miles distant from our present house for his work's sake, and also by his own preference. At noon of the second day Rev. Mr. Cantine called and found him quite sick. As both of us had been called out during the night and early morning to conduct two funerals of an English officer and a ship's carpenter, I did not call again on Kamil until six o'clock. Word met me that Kamil had died half an hour before.

What made this blow the heavier to us was the fact that on our arrival at the house we found it in the possession of Turkish soldiers and his papers seized and property sealed. On account of the heat burial could not be delayed. All there remained for us was to have prayers and speak with the gathered Moslems over the body. We also entered a protest the following day (as per enclosure) to the English Consulate.

The fact that Kamil had been a Moslem and was a Christian and an earnest worker in our Mission, was well known in Busrah ever since his arrival. Nevertheless, by means of his former Beyrout papers, and the fact that he had been a Moslem, they sought to justify their high-handed measures. Although we have abundant proof to establish the fact that he was a Christian and entitled to Christian burial, it could not be produced that same night, especially as some of the papers were in Kamil's sealed premises.

In the midst of the sorrow of our loss we feel confident that Kamil's death will not be without result for the glory of the gospel
The better-minded Moslems, and all others not Moslem, are open in expressing their disapproval of the Government’s action.

Ever since he was here Kamil has been a faithful and at times a very bold confessor of Christ and the gospel. Around his dead body were many who witnessed to the purity of his life and motives. His loss to our work will be great. He was far above the average of native workers in ability and earnestness, and was thoroughly disinterested.

With our next Quarterly Report we hope to send some further particulars as to his life and work while with us. Then, also, the Board of Trustees will learn further particulars as to the result of our protest, the urgency and necessity of which was evident to all of us unanimously.

We are very grateful to God that all of us here are now in excellent health and able, in spite of the intense heat, to carry on the burden of duties which this loss has occasioned.

Dr. C. E. Riggs is also well again and is crowded with patients and work daily. We are encouraged. Pray for us that the vacancy caused by a brother’s death may soon be filled and that all things here may work to the furtherance of the gospel.

Sincerely yours, for the Mission,

S. M. ZWEMER, F’ld Sec’y.