The Arabian Mission

Field Report

Number Twelve

October 1 to December 31, 1894
THE ARABIAN MISSION.

TRUSTEES.

Rev. Prof. J. P. Searle, D.D., Pres't, New Brunswick, N. J.
Rev. M. H. Hutton, D.D., New Brunswick, N. J.
Rev. C. L. Wells, D.D., Brooklyn, N. Y.
Rev. Lewis Francis, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Mr. Charles H. Harris, Hackensack, N. J.
Mr. John C. Giffing, New York.

HONORARY TRUSTEES.

Thomas Russell, Esq., Montclair, N. J.

Please draw checks and send remittances, or requests for information, to “The Arabian Mission.”

REV. HENRY N. COBB, D.D.,
Corresponding Secretary,
25 East 22d St., New York.
REPORT OF BUSRAH STATION.

The first few days in October were busy ones at the Busrah Mission House. We had not been together before in a long time; and in comparing notes of our summer's experience, and in making plans for the winter, the days passed too quickly. On the fourth, S. M. Zwemer left for Bahrein, and a week later P. J. Zwemer for Muscat. For the remainder of the quarter I was alone. Naif, the dispenser, was kept on in the hope that Dr. Wyckoff's successor would soon be on his way to us. At this time there was no colporteur at Busrah, and Naif was put in charge of the Bible-shop.

During October there was no English Sunday service. The rush and worry of the date packing, which absorbs all the seven days of the week, made it impossible to gather an audience. They were resumed in November, and are now held regularly, though our audience seldom numbers more than ten. Once or twice service was held on board a steamer in the river.

A plentiful supply of papers and magazines has enabled us to put good reading matter before the sailors of all the boats stopping at this port.

In October a determined effort was made to close the Bible-shop. Without any warning, all the books were carried to the court-house, and the shop sealed. In reply to a vigorous protest, I was told officially that neither shop nor books belonged to me, but were the property of the bookseller, Naif, who, being a Turkish subject, might get some of them back upon proper representation; and it was gently hinted that I had better engage in some other business. At first I was much afraid that Naif had gone over to the enemy, when it would have been a difficult matter for me to carry my point. However, he stood by me faithfully, though very much afraid of the police. After seemingly endless annoyance, I
regained possession of the shop and the Scriptures. The other books, however, were held for examination. All sorts of pretexts were given for prohibiting our religious books and tracts. Fortunately, about the beginning of the year, the United States Consul from Baghdad passed through Busrah, and together we gained the restitution of all except a few educational books, which have been sent to Constantinople for final judgment. After a flurry of this kind, which occurs about once a year, I trust we will be free from annoyance for another twelve months. In last quarter the arrest of Yohanna Yezdi, and in this the closing of the shop, have seriously interfered with our sales of Scriptures in Busrah, which in 1894 will amount to only a few more than in 1893. We now have in the shop Salome Anton, from Baghdad, and as he has brought his wife and family with him, we hope this position is permanently filled. On the Winter Bequest we have engaged Razouki Naaman, who has been with us before, and is an earnest worker. With these experienced helpers, we trust, under God's blessing, that our Bible work for 1895 will make a decided advance.

Another of the hopeful signs of the future is the coming of another physician, who is sadly needed.

One of the brightest spots of the past three months was the meeting with a former enquirer, of whom we had quite lost sight. He assures us, with a sincerity which we do not doubt, that he has accepted Christ, and is living in His strength. Doubtless there are many more, unknown to us, "whose knees have not bowed unto Baal." May God give us grace and strength to seek them out.

James Cantine.

Busrah, Jan. 1, 1895.

REPORT OF BAHREIN STATION.

God has given us cause for thanksgiving, for the many blessings throughout the quarter, and our work has gone on quietly, and without any active opposition. When I returned to my station, after my Yemen furlough, I found Ibrahim, our new helper, in charge, and, except for a natural decrease in sales at the bookshop, the general work did not suffer during my absence. Although it is not wise to leave a station such as Bahrein in the care of assistants alone for a long time, yet the fact that "converted Moslems" did live and do mission work here, unhindered and unhurt, is a proof of the freedom we enjoy.

From October 6th to December 3d, Ibrahim was my sole
helper. On the latter date, Naif (who is our dispensary assistant in Busrah) came here. His coming was opportune, as Ibrahim was sick with fever and dysentery for over a fortnight. Bahrein’s rainy season is not the healthiest time of the year, and

Our Dispensary

was well patronized, especially during November, when there was a sort of epidemic of Dengue fever. Every morning patients came to receive treatment, and often there was opportunity to sell a portion of Scripture or sow the seed by word of mouth. On my visits to the people at home, also, we have often found willing listeners to the Gospel. The total number of patients seen in the quarter was about 480. Actual number of new cases, 265. Of these, 38 were minor surgery—thirty-three extracting of teeth. That you may see us as others see us, I will quote what I heard a Moslem tell his friend, not knowing that I was listening: “He is not really a doctor, and is not from the Bombay Government, but he can cure fevers, and pull teeth without pain.” In one case I was asked to remove a troublesome molar, from a favorite wife of my neighbor, through a small hole cut in the heavy veil that hid the patient; it was not my first failure. If I tell you that I have been called to treat fractures, gun-shot wounds, acute mania, cystitis, pneumonia, and other diseases beyond all household remedies and layman diagnosis, I need not urge the absolute necessity of a medical missionary here. It is all well enough to make friends by quackery—and mine is far above their science—but the responsibility and anxiety is too much for one not qualified. The majority of the patients received free treatment, although I make a nominal charge (ten cents) for dentistry! The total receipts from patients (not counting fish, eggs, dates, and gifts in kind) was Rs. 117.12½ for the quarter, mostly received from the Hindoo merchants here.

The Book-Shop

is, next to the dispensary, our main fish-net, and in the matter of argument and witness we manage to catch a good many. Ibrahim, the colporteur in charge, came to us from Syria, via Alexandria, on recommendation of Dr. Jessup. He is a man of some education, and a high family, whose relations have been prominent with Islam and Babism for many years. He was baptized by Dr. Ewing in Alexandria, and reached here in July, during my absence. His daily work in the Bible-depot has been of great benefit to others, as well as to himself, we trust, while his knowledge of Turkish and Hebrew, as well as Arabic, won him additional listeners, from,
Ottoman officials and merchant Jews who visit Bahrein en route to Hassa. Scripture sales during this quarter have reached the highest number of any quarter so far, and the sale of religious books shows a fair increase. I append a summary of sales for the quarter, and also for the entire year. From the latter it appears that there has been a gain in the sale of Scriptures of 35 above last year, and of 153 in the total number of books sold. (This is exclusive, of course, of those distributed in Yemen.)

We enjoy absolute liberty of the press, it seems, and through my friendship with the Hindoos, who farm the customs from the Arab ruler, we pay no customs on books. "Mizan El Hak," "Sweet First Fruits," and other apologetics, are openly on sale in Arabic, Persian and English, and there has been not a word spoken against it. The English "protection" in this respect counts for a great deal, as popularly India law is held applicable to non-Moslem residents. I do not think this is actually the case, but we will not be in a hurry to seek for a test case. The one great difficulty of the past three months has been personal and private opposition in the matter of

**House Rent.**

Since coming to Bahrein, I have already written once and again about it in my reports, and it would be very tedious to tell the whole weary story of Oriental promises on paper, crooked dealings, and the everlasting, patience-trying "Inshallahs." The matter, in a nut-shell, is this: We have now paid the same sum as last year, in advance, for a year's rent. Seventy-two rupees is not extortion, after all, for mission premises here, though they are small, and not well located. The house difficulty remains, in case we receive reinforcements. So far, no one dares to offer a better house for rent, nor are there many decent houses in the village. Building would also be beset with difficulties. The colporteurs have found and secured a small upper room in the house of a Nejdee Arab, who was a stranger, and unaware of the proclaimed boycott. He is now trying to back out of the four months' contract, but has not yet succeeded. Even should we be, all of us, evicted, there remains the glorious possibility of

**Touring**

all over the islands, on donkeys and camels; and in summer we can use our tent. Frequent visits were made to Moharrek, the residence of several families of Seyyids, and the "capital" of Bahrein. Slowly but surely we find even there a market for books.
On two occasions we have been asked to "move on," or to cease selling "kufr," i.e., infidelity, but the warnings were unheeded, and the disobedience unpunished.

On November 20th, I set sail to visit Sharkeh, and the other important towns on the pirate coast south of Bahrein, in a native boat, belonging to a party of Arabs from Oman, who visited the dispensary. The attempt was a failure, however. North wind and heavy rain set in, after we were out of the harbor, and the men were obliged to throw anchor, and wait for daylight. All night we were tossed and soaked by rain and storm, and in the morning the weather was still worse. Finally, at noon, they ventured to lift anchor, and put back into harbor. Only if one knows the delay and "Inshallahs" in getting finally started, after six days' waiting, with baggage packed, only then does one feel the full disappointment of turning back, as we did. The boat did not go for seven days after that, and then it was not possible to go with them. This is the second time I have sailed for Sharkeh and not left Bahrein. The place is important (see map), and one of our colporteurs sold 99 books there, on his first visit. I hear there is a good caravan route thence, through fertile country, six days, to Muscat.

Accompanied by Naif, I made the tour of most of the small villages inland on this island in December. We had some interesting experiences with a Bedouin at Jebel Dokhan, and also met a man who had bought a penny Gospel two years ago and wanted a New Testament. The inland villagers, however, are nearly all unable to read, and exceedingly ignorant and rude. In concluding my quarter's report, I rejoice to speak of an earnest inquirer who came to the dispensary about two weeks ago, and has been coming to the house and to our Sunday Bible-class regularly ever since. He is a Perso-Arab. Originally a Shia, he tells me he joined the Sunni sect some years ago, and was under petty persecution for it. He has seen Christians in Bushire, and was first led to investigate Christianity by "hearing their descriptions of Christ's spotless character." He is indeed now very near, if not already in the kingdom. Yesterday I asked him why he loved Christ, and why when he prayed, he called Him "Lord?" His answer is characteristic. He first said: "I call Him Lord, because He is God's Son, and therefore eternal; and I love Him because He is without sin." "Is that the only reason you love Him?" "No; secondly, because. His religion is the only 'straight way.'" "Is that all?" "Yes, of course, I love Him most of all because He died for me."
He has given up his Moslem prayers, etc., and is not ashamed to kneel and pray with us. He is, of course, in need of teaching, and has many difficulties. I asked him to-day what was the matter with his foot. "Oh, that old bandage," he said, "is an excuse for those who ask why I come to you and so often; the foot is all right." It is more difficult than even a missionary can realize, and even in independent Bahrein, for a Moslem to turn apostate to the lie of thirteen centuries. Pray for him.

S. M. ZWEMER.

BAHREIN, January 4th, 1895.

ARABIAN MISSION, BAHREIN.

BOOK SALES, FOURTH QUARTER, 1894.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Testaments</th>
<th>Port.</th>
<th>Scriptures</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Educational</th>
<th>Total.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>243</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persian</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkish</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujerati</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>German</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value Rs. 21.1½ 37.12 36.9½ 95.7

Percentage of Sales to Muslim. 96%
" " Jews.
" " Christians. 3½ (on steamers, etc.)
" " Hindoos. ½

REPORT FOR MUSCAT STATION.

For the fourth quarter of 1894 we are able to report a fair average sale of Scriptures. An effort was made this quarter to see that each purchase was a bona-fide purchase, for the purpose of reading the book desired. A much larger number of sales might have been reported, if the sale of small portions to children, merely as toys, or to shop-keepers for sale as "cigarette paper," had been allowed.
A large invoice of religious and educational books ordered last quarter is still on its journey. As a consequence the stock of this kind of books was very meagre, and sales accordingly small.

We give the report of book sales as follows: Bibles, 5; Testaments, 5; Portions, 64; Scriptures, 74; Religious, 18; Educational, 34. Total, 126.

All the villages in the vicinity of Muscat, and under immediate rule of the Sultan, have repeatedly been visited, and in each Scriptures have been sold, and conversations held with fishermen gathered on the beach, and Arab merchants in their homes.

Touring in the further regions was deemed unadvisable this quarter, on account of the many petty internal strife, whereby mountain passes were closed and roads rendered unsafe. A certain Sheikh, who is in sympathy with the rightful heir to the throne and leads a powerful retinue, was on the warpath the greater part of October and November, even at one time threatening to besiege Muscat, as he had done in 1881.

Towards the end of the year, however, with the exception of an occasional feud, the former semi-peaceful state of affairs prevailed.

For some time every effort has been put forth to open a school at Muscat.

Twice all preparations had been made. Several parents had consented to send their children, a teacher was procured, verbal permission from the Sultan had been obtained, but at both times a few jealous Moslem Nuiallahs, or teachers, by intimidating the parents, effectively thwarted our plans. In the future, we still hope, this opposition may be overcome, and some sort of educational and industrial work begun.

The one great, effective method to reach the Moslem, is the personal contact afforded in conversations with them in their shops and houses.

No government or priest can forbid the simple conversing with friends concerning religion, and when they inadvertently, perhaps, purchase the Scriptures, we may put to them the question of Philip to the eunuch of Candace, “Understandest thou what thou readest?” In this sense all Moslem lands are accessible, and in this way we were privileged to witness the truth, as it is in Jesus, to many.

P. J. Zwemer.