The

Arabian Mission

Field Report

Number Nine, Jan. 1 to March 31, 1894
THE ARABIAN MISSION.

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REV. HENRY N. COBB, D.D.

Corresponding Secretary,
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REPORT OF BUSRAH STATION.

For a considerable portion of the past Quarter Busrah has had the presence of two missionaries.

About the middle of January S. M. Zwemer arrived from Bahrein, hoping to enjoy a needed rest and change, but a severe illness confined him to the house for the larger part of the six weeks he remained. He returned, however, in good health, after having helped greatly by his companionship, advice, and active assistance.

Dr. Wyckoff also arrived in March, much sooner than had been expected, bringing with him the cheer and encouragement of willing heart and able hands.

There have been a few changes among our assistants and colporteurs. Hakim Safïr was transferred to Muscat to take the place of Naoum Kallou, who has, for the present, left our employ; and Razouki accompanied Mr. Zwemer to Bahrein. In turn, Salomi, who was with us formerly, came from Bagdad to work in Busrah. Daood has remained with us and has done good, faithful service in the Bible-shop, on the road, and at our Sunday services.

Our book sales in Busrah have shown a marked increase, mainly owing to street to street visitation. The record of total sales for the quarter is appended.

Our colporteurs have taken no very extended tours lately; Gurah, at the junction of the two rivers, Mahomerah, and Kuweit, on the Persian Gulf, being the towns visited. The latter place is two days' rough travel over the desert. It has not been visited by our men before, and their reception was by no means cordial. The second day they were compelled to take a speedy departure, after having sold only a few Scriptures. Before very long I hope it will be tried again by one of the missionaries.

There has been but slight friction with the Turkish Government during the three months past. The Bibles
which were taken from our man in December, while he was at Nasarieh, and afterwards lost, were, upon representation to the Governor, made good by purchases from our shop.

Our services, Arabic and English, and our harbor work have gone on as usual, and this brief report can best close with our grateful acknowledgment of God's continual favor and blessing.

JAMES CANTINE.

BAGDAD, April 25, 1894.

BOOK SALES FOR THE ENTIRE MISSION.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Scriptures</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Educational</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Busrah</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>217</td>
<td>719</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bahrein</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>211</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscat</td>
<td>293</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>388</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>798</strong></td>
<td><strong>177</strong></td>
<td><strong>343</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,318</strong></td>
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Total value of sales, R's 556.7.6 = $163.64.

REPORT OF WORK AT BAHREIN.

The work of the past quarter cannot show such large statistics as that of the former quarter, because I was absent from the islands for nearly six weeks, during which time Naif Kaimy, our colporteur, was alone. On January 11th I felt it necessary to leave for a short change, expecting that a visit to Busrah would rid me of a low fever and brace me up for work again in a week or two. But, instead, there followed a slight attack of pneumonia, which prolonged my absence from work, and for the want of a mission-doctor cost us 108 rupees in attendance by the European residents' physician.

On the 28th of February I returned to Bahrein with Razouki, one of our Busrah colporteurs. This increase of forces was deemed necessary, in order that one of the colporteurs might tour among the villages and on the coast of Arabia, while the other had charge of the shop at Menameh. So far this arrangement has proved satisfactory.

OUR BIBLE SHOP

has been open every day, except Sunday, the entire quarter, and although sales were small in January and February, because of the wet season, and the lull in all trade on the island during the month of Ramadan, before the Pearl-fisheries
begin, yet we have met with other encouragements. An open place where the Scriptures are *read* and *heard* is an important agency, even when statistics of actual sales are small. In March sales increased, especially the sale of educational books and cheap tracts, such as "Faith and Works," "On Drink," "On Gambling," "The Lord's Prayer," etc. The difficulty in regard to a suitable place for our Bible work has at last been solved completely, at least for a year to come. Early in January we were forced to leave our old place on account of exorbitant rent, and went to a smaller shop in an inferior location. But it was God's purpose that we should return to the old place where our first sales were made, and which is the best location by far, in the whole bazaar, for our purpose. From a letter written to Mr. Scudder in January, you will see that we scarcely expected such good fortune. A wet season, however, "such as was never seen before," the Arabs say, visited the islands; twelve days of continued rain soaked the mud walls and roofs of all the houses; many of them fell in, among them our Bible-shop; but our colporteur, in my absence, begged mercy of the old landlord, and obtained permission to re-enter the old shop for a month, until after the rains. The exorbitant offer of the hostile Shirazee seems to have melted away in the general "*tohu and vohu*" of mud and slush, and so, when I came, I succeeded in writing that place down to the mission for one year, at ten rupees per month. The moral victory over "the Sheikh" is so apparent and important to the people here, that we are glad to be back again. In this shop we can remind Moslem pharisees, who try to interfere with sales, that we are on "holy" ground, for the shop is *Wakf* (*i.e.*, religious property), and we pay rent to the Kadhi of all Bahrein—to the same man who once tried to expel us from the islands.

In March, Razouki, the new colporteur, was at the shop every morning and afternoon. The Ramadan month, with its hypocrisy of fasting by day, and its nights of feasting and all kinds of debauchery, is not the best time in the year for our work. And it is encouraging that just in this month our total *value* of sales was larger than in any month previous. Religious and educational books were sold to strangers from Nejd and Lingah and Muscat, as to the islanders, and Razouki exercised the office of evangelist as well as that of salesman: Very often large companies gather in front of
our shop, or to hear the "baby-organ" at the house, and then we preach the Word.

TOURING.

During the past quarter I have drawn a large map of all the islands, showing the location of the villages, so as to have an intelligent basis for touring in the future. Naif was of great assistance in this, as he made a tour of all the villages along the west coast of the larger island in January. Razouki and I visited the town of Aifa, with books and medicines, in March. The large town and island of Moharrek has continued to prove rather hostile to our frequent visits, and the people unwilling to purchase Scriptures although willing to receive medicines. By continuing at it, however, this ought to prove as open a door for the Gospel as the village of Menameh.

On March 6th, Naif went to the mainland to visit Kateef with books, but he was forbidden to remain because he had no Turkish passport. As soon as I can obtain a passport from Busrah, I will go there myself again and see what can be done. On March 17th Naif was sent on a longer tour to the town of Sharkeh, among the Bni Jowassim, on the formerly notorious pirate coast, south from here.

Sharkeh is the largest village on the coast between here and Muscat, and is a centre of trade for Eastern Oman; there is a native British agent, and also a number of Banian traders. Naif reported success in sales from Lingah, but has not yet returned; we hope he will dispose of all the Bibles and books he took with him, and meet with no accident or opposition.

MEDICAL WORK was carried on as before, from January 1st to 20th, and from March 1st to 31st. The number of new patients was much smaller than during the last quarter, because of the interruption by my absence. No pious Moslem is allowed to swallow even his spittle, in the Moslem Lent, from dawn to sunset, and much less will he take a pill or have a tooth extracted. So our clinics were mostly in the twilight, and doses were prescribed, "three times a night a teaspoonful." It was a disputed point whether hypodermic medication was breaking the fast; and one man even feared to use eye-water until after the evening breakfast.
The total number of new cases during the six weeks was seventy-seven, and the amount received from patients 46 rupees, one anna (= $15.00 nearly). Among them were men from Kateef Katar and the Persian Coast, as well as from Bahrein. It is very trying and discouraging to me to turn away patients whose troubles exceed my skill or knowledge of medicine; therefore, I cannot urge too strongly nor too often that Arabia needs fully qualified medical missionaries, and that, in my opinion, every missionary sent out should, if possible, take a medical training at least elementary. To God alone be the glory for what He has done in opening this door for the Gospel during the past year; and to Him thanksgiving for preserving the work and the workers from evil.

S. M. Zwemer.

MENAMEH VILLAGE, March 31st, 1894.

REPORT FOR MUSCAT STATION.

That Muscat should be occupied as the second substation of the Arabian Mission, seems a most natural extension of our work around the coast of Arabia. Like Busrah and Bahrein, it is a steamer port, has regular mails, and, although excessively hot, the climate is healthy and free from the malaria so prevalent elsewhere.

A stay of five months in the place has shown us the need and the opportunity of work in this the trade centre of entire Oman. The sales in our Bible shop for this quarter, amounting to 388 copies, of which 293 were Scriptures or portions, at a total value of nearly 100 rupees, compare favorably with the reports of Busrah and Bahrein.

The freedom granted to Europeans on account of the peculiar relation of the Sultan's Government to that of Great Britain, is an incalculable privilege in a Mohammedan country. The Scriptures may be freely read in public. Open discussion at either of the large city gates, in the presence of a European, will not be disturbed, and instruction where such is desired may be freely given.

On the other hand, a mixed population of Arabs, Beloochees, Persians, Africans and Banians, a large proportion of which is illiterate, besides the all too prevalent evils of a foreign sea-port, render missionary effort peculiarly difficult.

For the first quarter of '94, the work that seemed to offer
itself to us, besides the continued study of the language, was three-fold:

1st. The sale of Bibles and books. With our efficient colporteur, Naoum Kallou (native Christian from Mosul), daily at work in the Bible shop, besides the sales on the tours inland and along the coast, the report of sales for the quarter is encouraging. The Bible shop in the main bazaar was open daily, and a large sign invites passers-by, in three languages to pause, purchase and peruse. During January, February, and the first week in March, Naoum was in charge as colporteur. Considering the intellectual and spiritual barrenness of the place, the large number of sales show that Muscat is not wholly lost in the death of ignorance. In March, Mr. Hakim Safir, a convert from Mohammedanism from India, took the place of Naoum, and will be in charge during my stay in Busrah.

2nd. Preaching and teaching. Muscat is perhaps the only place so far reached by our mission where public Scripture reading or discussion, when and where such is advisable, could be conducted undisturbed. Bible readings have been attempted in the favored place of resort, The Gates, and were listened to, if not with assent, with the proverbial Arab politeness.

A desire for instruction is not universal in a place so sunken in ignorance and vice, yet there always is a demand for "lessons in English." I succeeded in gathering six pupils as a primary class in English, hoping this might form the nucleus of a school. Upon request, His Highness, the Sultan of Muscat, promised a written permit for instruction in English as soon as a school is opened. A sufficient number of pupils who approached regularity in attendance has not yet been secured, however.

The immediate need in Muscat is a better place of abode. The house rented for the present is located in the focus of what is known as the "Parabolic Mirror," formed by the surrounding mountains, and during the summer months the heat, while tolerable at another location, will be unbearable here.

3d. Touring. The villages of Sedab, Ry'am, Bustan, Kalboo and Matrah, lying round about Muscat, have been frequently visited. All but the latter are small fishers' villages. Matrah is the terminus of the caravan route inland. This place has been regularly canvassed by colporteurs
about once a week. An inland tour has not been attempted on account of the fact, that when permission was asked it was conditioned that no books were to be taken. Many Arabs, however, from the interior have visited our shop and made purchases.

Although attended with some risk from Bedouins and storms at sea, the 'Oman coast can be reached by touring in the many and various native sailing craft. For this quarter we are able to report a tour along the coast north from Muscat to Sohar. The boat selected as best suited to our purpose, a "Bedden," is a swift sailing craft, some thirty feet in length, with eight feet beam. Taking with us about one hundred Bibles and books, and supplies for the trip, we left Muscat on Friday, March 23, and, the wind favoring us the entire distance, returned after six days, on March 29.

We had procured letters of permission to travel, from the Sultan, to the Walys or Governors of the principal places along the coast.

Sieb, Birka, Mus'anna, Suwaik, and Sohar, were visited. At each place I was well received and hospitably treated by the Governor. Bibles and books were sold and given away and the message of the Book spoken freely. There is a sameness in the places along the east coast of 'Oman. A walled city with moat complete, large fort in the center, and watch-towers along the sea beach, all in very poor repair, surrounded by the innumerable date leaf huts of the common class, and the more pretending mud brick houses of the Arab trader, completes the sketch of each. In the background stretch the date groves many miles in extent, and well supplied with water by springs and wells, while to the north the rocky Mountain chain recedes farther and farther from Muscat, until, at Sohar, it is a three days' journey distant.

Sieb is a place of perhaps two thousand inhabitants. Here I am urged by some Arabs to go with them inland. This was evidently with intent to rob, and only shows what continual watchfulness their treachery requires.

Birka is next in size and importance to Sohar, and has a population of perhaps 15,000. Here a request was made for a doctor. A similar tour along the coast by a medical missionary would be one long story of suffering relieved.

At Mus'anna I was again hospitably received at the fort, which is, at the same time, the residence of the Waly. We are admitted into the large enclosure through the "Needle's
Eye" of the ponderous gate, guarded by a tall, black, Nubian slave, who excludes the inquisitive crowd by means of a strong stick ingeniously hinged to the creaking door. In the presence of all the "Elders" of the place we are introduced to the Governor, who gladly receives a few choice books in return for his hospitality. A few Persian traders here asked for copies of the Scriptures, of which they had heard in their own country. Besides these there are a number of Banians from India at this place.

Above Mus'anna lies Suwaik, an almost exact duplicate of the former place. With the fish-yielding sea before, the date groves behind, his every wish supplied, the Arab lives content.

Sohar is the terminus of our tour, as well as of the Sultan's domain. Along the coast it is the place next in importance to Muscat. I am given a room in the fort—a large, ruined structure, dating back to the time of the Portuguese possession—where a number of Arabs assembled and entertained me with questions, various and divergent, demanding to know the reason of the depreciation of silver, as well as the authority of the Prophet of Nazareth above that of the prophet of Arabia. At this place I disposed of some twenty Scriptures, the remainder of what I had taken, and in order to be back at Muscat in time for the steamer to Busrah, we set sail the following morning, and on the third day rode into Muscat harbor.

My tour proves, first, the possibility of thus reaching at least the coast of 'Oman with the Gospel. Second, it shows that in 'Oman naught opposes the Gospel but Islam itself.

P. J. Zwemer.