The Arabian Mission

Field Report

Number Nineteen

July 1 to September 30, 1896.
THE ARABIAN MISSION.

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BUSRAH AND BAHREIN.

For preserving all of us in health during the trying heat; for freedom from any interference with our work on the part of the government; for many opportunities given us to preach the Word to Moslems at our house and by the wayside, we praise God at the close of this quarter. Our helpers, too, have proved faithful in their work in the burden and heat of the day. To go and sell books on the streets, or persuade fanatical coffee-shop gazers to read a page of the Gospel when the thermometer registers 107 degrees Far. in the shade, is not always a means of grace to the colporteur, whatever it may prove to the purchaser.

Our book-shop keeper, Salome Anton, has left us after two-and-a-half years of service. His father's sudden death recalled him to Bagdad, whence he came to us. He continues, however, in his old work, under the C. M. S. His place is at present taken, but not filled, by Isa Abd El Messia, who came to us from Mosul.

THE BOOK-SHOP,

which now has the small library attached to it, continues a favorite resort for many who pass through the bazaar. Several papers are kept on file and tracts are freely distributed. The sales for the quarter are added in a table. When the Mission came to Busrah, there was no book-shop of any sort in all the city. Korans and primers were sold by the grocers and general dealers. Now an enterprising Moslem has opened a rival book store. I believe the contrast, as well as the imitation, are an advertisement for the Protestant shop. At our dispensaries every morning a quantity of illustrated leaflets are distributed after preaching to the patients. Occasionally—as once during this quarter—a traveller or resident
European purchases a quantity of Scriptures for distribution among Moslems. In this way the Word of God often goes into distant parts.

TOURING.

Mr. and Mrs. Zwemer were absent from Busrah from July 16th to Aug. 27th, on a visit to Muscat. Doctor Worrall left for Bahrein on Sept. 17th. On these journeys in the Gulf, the Missionaries always have opportunity to visit the various ports, and often, especially if accompanied by a colporteur, to dispose of copies of the Scriptures among the passengers. The Gulf steamers often carry as many as two or three hundred deck passengers.

On our return from Muscat, Isa, the colporteur, visited the Pirate coast and sold 101 books and bibles. A week after his visit, the village of Thabbee, the largest on that coast (some 620 houses), was burned down, it is said by hostile Arabs for the sake of looting. The usual journeys were also made to the villages near Busrah, and while I write, two of the colporteurs are on a tour to the date plantations below Busrah, where at this season a large population from all parts of the river country is collected to pack dates for the London and New York markets. The native merchants, also, many of them, live in the gardens to supervise the work. The extent of this industry may be known from the fact that the entire date harvest shipped from Busrah is about 150,000 tons annually.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES

on Sundays, in Arabic and English, were held uninterruptedly. On July 12th, when we celebrated the Lord's Supper, Daniel, the youngest of our colporteurs, was admitted into full membership of the church, after examination. It is lamentable that hitherto our efforts, perhaps not directed vigorously enough or in the right channels, have not resulted in bringing Moslems to our Arabic preaching. But we have had as many as thirty-five present at our daily dispensary services, and this is encouraging.

THE WORK FOR WOMEN,

by Mrs. Zwemer, both in the dispensary and by frequent visits to their homes, has been continued as before. Language-study has been carried on under difficulty by all of us, because of the want of a qualified teacher and the summer heat. At present we employ
a Mulla, who is, we are sorry (and glad) to say, often more interested in the contents of Job and the gospels than in the pronunciation of his pupils.

AT AMARA.

Merad and his family have lived in peace and quiet. The little shop gives out its light day by day. Scripture sales have slightly increased. Beside the soldier, spoken of in previous reports, others visit Merad to read and pray with him. His wife, as a sequel to her exposure and suffering during the massacres at Saert before they came to us, was greatly troubled with weak eyes, almost blindness. She came down to Busrah for a short time to be treated, telling us she had made a vow that if God restored her sight she would read the Gospel daily to her Moslem sisters. It was a joy to us all, that even before leaving Busrah she began to pay her vow unto the Lord, at the dispensary, with a little group of waiting patients about her. God grant her grace to lead many of the blind in heart to the Light of Life.

Doctor Worrall gives the following report of the

MEDICAL WORK:

With a record of over 1,200 treatments we have had a busy yet uneventful quarter. As usual, we have our failures and successes to consider as well as blessings without number. The health of the mission has been unusually good. The dispensary assistant, coming from the native town of Busrah to the mission house on the creek, was overcome by the heat and has been recuperating for the last two weeks, during which time the doctor compounded the medicines as well as diagnosed and prescribed for the patients. Before the patients are treated the Scriptures are read and spoken about, and prayer is offered. The analysis of the work for the quarter is found at the end of this report. Attention is called to the great preponderance of Moslems treated, in accordance with the Mission's object. Ever since a Bedaween boy came from the desert and was successfully treated, we have had quite a number of this class, and we find them, generally speaking, very grateful. Another interesting item is the increased freedom with which Arab women come for treatment. When they first came they were very careful how they exposed their faces, but now the doctor can examine their eyes and tongues without cutting a hole in the veil! The doctor would like to express his thanks to the Board that
there was such a complete set of obstetric instruments on hand, as they have been of signal service this quarter in enabling him to help the wife of an Arab from a fanatic town a few miles from here. She was in great trouble and needed an operation, which was performed at the close of a sultry day. Because we did not, however, have hospital facilities, and could only give her a place on a cot in the courtyard, the patient died from septic poisoning a few days after the operation. Her husband seemed much impressed by the kindness shown, and read through one of the Gospels while faithfully watching by the side of his wife.

We are dreaming of a hospital. Dreams have come true in the past, why not in the future? We lean heavily on a Power to fulfill all necessary things.

Although surgery figures second in the analysis, still we have been enabled to perform several paracenteses before the eyes of the Arabs, who were very much astonished to see a pailful of water taken from a helpless man and then behold the same patient get up and walk home. Broken limbs, smashed fingers or hands, alveolar abscesses, form a common form of surgical trouble easily remedied and quickly cured.

### TABLE OF CASES FOR THIS QUARTER.

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<thead>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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**BAHREIN**

has not been visited during the Quarter. It was a great disappointment to us that steamers from Muscat did not call there on their way to Busrah. Ibrahim has kept us informed of his work, and a record of Scripture sales is enclosed with those of Busrah.

At the small dispensary he was kept busy helping the poor, sick people of the island. In July he reports 162, and in August 150 cases treated. From Dr. Worrall's letter, on reaching Bahrein, at the close of this quarter, we learn that Ibrahim is down with fever and was glad of the doctor's arrival. Next quarter you may hope for a fuller report of this station. All our work is sorely in need of, and we are thirsting for, showers from on high. "Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit." Pray for us.

**Busrah, September 30th, 1896.**

S. M. Zwemer.
### BOOK SALES, THIRD QUARTER, 1896.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Testaments</th>
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### BAHREIN.

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<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&quot; Christians</td>
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### MUSCAT.

We are thankful that, in spite of the fact that this year the hot season has been longer and more intense than usual, we were able to remain at Muscat the entire quarter.

I was glad to have with me during the month of August my brother and his wife from Busrah. Their visit to Muscat gave opportunity for an extensive tour in Oman.
BIBLE WORK.

The Scriptures sold on my tour in Oman increase our Sales Report considerably, and we are able to report as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bibles</th>
<th>Testaments</th>
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<th>Religious</th>
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<td>5</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>171</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>............</td>
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<td>............</td>
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</table>

4 5 168 177 3 16 196

TOURING.

I had for some time waited a favorable opportunity, during a cessation of the almost incessant intertribal wars, to visit the interior of Oman.

In August comparative peace reigned, and I was enabled to visit Rastak, Nakhel and Someil, each of which is a populous and important centre. Rastak has a government of its own. The remainder of eastern Oman shows more or less allegiance to the Sultan of Muscat.

We journeyed along the coast to Seeb and Musanna, stopping at each a day. We had visited these coast towns before, and therefore did not delay. Our object was to reach the interior. Just at sunset we set out on camels from Musanna, and all night long we rode through the belt of "seekh," or desert land, which separates the fertile "batina" coast, from the interior mountain ranges. The mountain streams which irrigate the wide wadys, whose rich verdure makes them appear like emeralds as one looks down upon them from some high mountain pass, are lost in this desert before they find their way to the sea.

Long after midnight we reached the first of a continuous line of villages from the desert to Rastak, which lies under the shadow of the "jebel akhdar" (green mountains).

The large wady is at intervals irrigated by splendid springs, from which the water is easily distributed through the extensive date plantations.

Every hour of our journey we passed through the shaded lanes of one of these villages, and most refreshing it was, after the
fierce heat in the wady, to be regaled with Arab hospitality on fresh milk, dates and mangoes. Jumma, Musfa, Hasm, Fellage, Shera, Lushate, Muzahate, Obil, Teeha, El Ghushub. We were glad to descend from our camels at each of them as long as the caravan driver allowed us. At each we left portions or copies of the Scripture. As far as I could learn no Christian Scriptures had ever reached these places before, and it was perhaps on this account that nowhere did we meet the quick refusal of the Gospel so common in Moslem lands.

Wearied by a tiresome camel ride of fourteen hours in a temperature always above 100°, we reached Rastak at midday, where we were most hospitably received by the Sheikh.

Rastak boasts of a fine fort built by the Persians, now partly ruined, having been besieged twice; has several well-kept mosques, each mosque having its school where a continued reciting of the Koran finally enables at least a few of the pupils to read.

Perhaps there is a larger percentage of literate people here than in any other part of Oman.

Our entire stock of Scriptures was sold the first afternoon, as we sat under a huge mango tree and spoke to hundreds of Arabs who inquisitively came to see us. Later on, a fanatical Mullah gave orders to return the Gospels we had sold them. The majority, however, remained with the purchasers.

After two days' visit we left Rastak at sunrise, and passing El-a-wada, a village of some size, two hours' journey from Rastak, we struck out for the Wady Abjath, whose stony length requires a full day's journey, and there is only one oasis where water can be found. At 9 p.m. we reached Mutwee, and on the morrow an hour's ride brought us to Nakhel, second in size to Rastak. Our stock of Scriptures being exhausted, we engaged a special messenger to bring a new supply from Muscat, and for once the swift "ship of the desert" was in the service of the King.

Nakhel has a large fort, also built by the Persians. Otherwise there are few stone buildings, the people living mostly in date-leaf huts. The place was plunged in a civil war on account of the accession of a new Sheikh, and there was some fighting and much more discussion. We sold a number of Scriptures, however. From here a two-days' journey brings one to the top of "Jebel akhdar," and we were tempted to ascend to higher ground and lower temperature. Choosing, however, to visit the populous Someil valley, we left the mountains for a future tour and pressed on.

Between Nakhel and Someil lie some of the most attractive
villages in Oman. A mountain stream of some size follows the course of the Wady, and whenever the valley widens sufficiently to admit of a date plantation it is diverted and changes barrenness into bloom. In these oases, dates, pomegranates, oranges, bananas, and every kind of tropical fruit abound, and rightly is one village named Seroor (i.e., pleasure.)

Stopping at Hasenat, Karra, where there are indigo plantations, Tou, Gubra, we reach Bwah at mid-day, and Finja, a beautiful scattered village where the stream widens out to a small lake, in the evening.

Another day and another succession of villages, at each of which we left a few copies of Scripture, we reached Someil.

The Someil valley is perhaps the most populous district in Eastern Oman and the home of the famous Muscat date.

Unhappily the valley is inhabited by two hostile tribes—the Ghaferi and Hinawee—and there is almost continual intertribal war.

Here also we sold or distributed many a Gospel, with its message of peace, with a prayer for the hastening of the day when even in Oman, He shall rule whose reign is peace.

A two-days' journey down the Someil wady brought us back to Muscat.

THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR FREED SLAVES.

The eighteen freed slave boys made excellent progress during this quarter, both in acquiring the English language and in such employments as could be given them. With one exception they are all in good health. A teacher from the M. E. Mission in Karachi was engaged to teach them, and gives every satisfaction. In regard to conduct and mental capacity, the boys give great promise for the future.

Yours faithfully, for Arabia,

P. J. Zwemer.

A PLEA FOR THE SUPPORT OF A FEW RESCUED SLAVES AT MUSCAT.

A special opportunity calls for a special plea at this time for Muscat Station.

As may be known to some of the friends of the Arabian Mission, a number of liberated slave-boys were received on May 27th,
1896, and are now in my care. There is still carried on a considera-
able trade in slaves along the Oman coast, and occasionally, as per-
mitted by the "Brussels Conference," slave dhows are captured, 
the owners punished and the slaves liberated. During May last 
three slave-dhows were captured in the vicinity of Muscat. They 
contained in all forty-four slaves, the majority of them being boys 
between the ages of six and twelve, as these bring the highest 
prices in the slave marts of Oman.

Usually such slaves, when liberated by the British Govern-
ment, are taken to Bombay where, under police supervision, they 
find various employments. At times, when large numbers were 
liberated, special effort has been made in their behalf by the Mis-
sions in India. At present, however, few slave-dhows having been 
captured during the last few years, there is no organized effort to 
train and educate them. Such liberated slaves, as long as they 
are minors, are the wards of the British Government, which is not 
averse to handing them over to suitable parties for training and 
support until they become of age (eighteen years), when each re-
ceives his liberation certificate.

On the occasion of the capture of the slave dhows in May, 
application was made to the British Consul for the boys under 
twelve years of age. Eighteen were granted me, for which, con-
sidering that this was in the line of our legitimate work, i. e., "for 
Muslims and slaves," and feeling in duty bound to undertake this 
unsought but promising task, I signed a bond to provide for their 
support and training until of age.

The Board of Trustees of the Arabian Mission has approved 
of the opening of a School for Rescued Slaves on condition that 
special funds can be secured for their support. After a careful 
calculation I find that $25.00 a year for each boy will provide for 
his support. May I ask that a few friends of our work supply this 
special need? Perhaps there are Sunday-schools or C. E. Societies 
who would be willing to provide for the support of one or more of 
these boys by an extra gift. I cannot but believe it to be a most 
promising work. The boys have been with me now for four 
months. With two exceptions (one of whom has been ailing and 
the other almost totally blind) they are bright, sterling youths.

From the beginning, they knowing only their native tongue, 
(Swahete), I have taught them English. This would not only keep 
them aloof from Moslem influence, but also be more useful to them 
than Arabic. Now Swahete is almost entirely discarded. English, 
after a struggle, has gained the day. They have been taught to
read as well as speak, and the majority are now ready for their Second Reader. The older ones begin to realize their liberation from servitude, and often express their gratitude. All have received, at their own preference, Christian names, and we hope that in after years they may be brought to believe with the heart and confess with the mouth, that they may also receive Christian baptism and become witnesses for Him "who hath made them free indeed." We believe that our School for Rescued Slaves will prove a blessing not only to the boys but to the Moslem at Muscat as well.

But we are still waiting for a small special gift for this work.

Yours faithfully, for Arabia,

P. J. Zwemer.