The

Arabian Mission

Field Report

Number Twenty-Two

April 1 to June 30, 1897
THE ARABIAN MISSION.

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Quarterly Field Report of the Arabian Mission

April-June, 1897.

BUSRAH AND BAHREIN.

The three months of April, May, and June just past are generally considered a very favorable season of the year for our Mission work. The winter's rains are over, while strength and energy are not yet being evaporated under the summer sun. Especially are we accustomed to do much in the way of colportage and touring. This year, however, has seen a decrease in this branch of work, mainly due to the continuance of quarantine. Busrah is quite cut off from communication with the South, and our men have been able to visit only two or three villages about a day's journey distant. Though the plague at Bombay is decreasing, still it may be a long time before the quarantine is removed and vexatious delays are over. We must be thankful, however, that the disease has not gained a footing in this direction, where its progress would have been but little impeded by any sanitary legislation.

We have been having the usual difficulty in getting good assistants and colporteurs. One man who was well recommended by the brethren at Mosul quite refused to consider the possibility of being sent to such "terrible places" as Bahrein or Muscat. Another from Baghdad we took on trial, but after he had faithfully tramped through the streets of Busrah for a month and had only sold one book—value, one penny—we mutually decided that he had best engage in other employment. The only extended tour was taken by the colporteur Esa to Nasariyeh on the Euphrates. Dr. Worrall, who accompanied him, will tell in his report of their successful journey.

In our Bible and book shop here in Busrah an effort to collect a debt gave rise to an interesting episode. The Mudir el Muarif, or chief inspector of the press, had not paid for several books pur-
chased at the shop, and others he had not given up after they had been left with him for examination. Our assistant was always put off when he asked for a settlement, until he was discouraged. Finally I went myself to ask the meaning of the delay, and was told that the books had been mislaid somewhere in the office, but would be found by a certain day. I went away knowing it was a promise not meant to be fulfilled, but I was satisfied with the acknowledgment that the books were, or should be there, and when, at the time appointed, I was met with further excuses, I immediately arose and left the building, intimating that he had better look out for the unexpected. He was evidently impressed, for the next day our assistant was called in to help in a thorough search through dusty bookcases and boxes for our books. Not one was found, as I suppose the Mudir had made them a part of his private library long before. But instead, about two dozen volumes were unearthed, of books which we had given up for lost long ago. They were books which had been confiscated by the government, and to regain which all our efforts, both here and at Constantinople, had been unavailing. Some had been sent to Constantinople and returned with a great official seal of disapproval on the fly-leaf; others had a written condemnation because they contained the word "Armenia," or had hinted that Turkey was not the greatest power on the Eastern Continent. All these expressions of official disapproval were carefully removed by the official who had been instrumental in having them placed there, and then they were handed over with the request that, as the others could not be found, these would be taken instead! The value was about the same—nine or ten dollars—and it was considered discretion to take back the confiscated books, reserving our claim to the others, and holding it as a sort of pledge for the future good behavior of the Mudir. Altogether it was a fairly good example of the flexibility of law in Turkey, and a demonstration of the truth of the saying, that a great many things come to him who waits.

The war between Greece and Turkey has not caused any very great excitement here. Two or three Greek residents were ordered to leave, but the order was not executed. Telegrams from Turkish sources were circulated and sold in the streets, the proceeds of which were said to be for the relief of families of Mohammedans in Crete murdered by Christians! But outside of the official class there were few indications that the people took
much interest in the matter, though Turkish prestige has doubtless been greatly advanced.

Two Armenian refugees, one of whom had been at Constantinople during the massacres, lately appealed to me for help in getting out of Turkey. They had come all the way from Armenia, and their desire to get beyond the power of the police was only equalled by their fear of being detected in the effort. I took them off one night to a steamer that was to sail early the next morning, and their gratitude made me feel quite as if I were in charge of one of the old time stations of the "underground railway."

The sixtieth anniversary of the Queen's reign was celebrated here by the resident Englishmen to the best of their ability and with much patriotism. We took advantage of the 20th of June falling on a Sunday to have a special English service. This is the only English service we have been able to hold on shore during the past quarter, though two or three have been held on steamers. The presence in the river of an English gunboat will, I trust, give us further opportunity during the summer.

Our outstation at this place, under the care of Amara Murad, has reported a steady sale of Scriptures, and larger numbers visiting the Bible shop. A slight interference with our work at the hands of a government official has been happily overcome, and, we trust, will not be repeated.

As a result of Dr. Worrall's recent visit to this place we have just sent Esa, one of our best men, to stay for a longer or shorter time as Providence may indicate. He has taken with him a plentiful supply of books, and with his experience and the preparation made by the recent visit of our medical missionary, we trust that the initial difficulties in the opening of new work in Turkey may be speedily overcome. In our next letter we hope to be able to report a successful three months of Christian effort near this old home of Abraham.

Except for a brief visit from Rev. P. J. Bahrein Zwemer, this station has been left vacant during most of the quarter. It was considered unwise to leave our colporteur alone there for the summer, and he was
allowed to return to Busrah. After our reinforcements arrive from America we hope to carry forward the work which has been so encouraging in the past.

Reserving the best of our letter for the last, we are very happy in telling of a Mohammedan from Amara who, nearly a year ago, was impressed by what he read and heard at our Bible shop there. Afterwards, on suspicion of his leaning toward Christianity, he suffered persecution at Baghdad, being compelled to give up most of his property to other members of his family. His business has now brought him to Busrah, where he has been a constant attendant at our daily prayers, and has told us much of his hopes and experiences. It is too soon to say how deeply the truth has lodged in his heart, but it is a blessed thing to know that God's power and love are being evidenced to us in another enquiring soul.

That our most earnest enquirers have all come from outside the city of Busrah we are constantly noticing.

It is a humiliation and grief to us that so little spiritual result is seen from our work here. But that God is blessing our efforts at reaching out into the “regions beyond” is to us a plain leading of providence, and an encouragement to plant the banner of the Cross on other vantage points in the Mesopotamia valley. Our prayer and hope now are that we may be able to occupy as out-stations not only Amara, but also Nasariyeh, and that from these two watch towers on the plain the voices of God's servants may sound out clear and fearless calling to repentance and the acceptance of salvation through Christ the Son of God.

JAMES CANTINE.

MEDICAL REPORT.

I left Busrah April 19th on the steamer for Amara, where we have a colporteur at work. There had been many requests for the doctor to come, and so there was no difficulty or delay in gathering a crowd of patients. Such was the crowd and insistence that one morning we began treating at 4.20 A.M., and could not stop until past one, after which we, self and the colporteur Esa who accompanied me, managed to get a drink of tea and a morsel of cracker to stay the inner man until a more substantial meal could be made ready. The morning's work gave a record of over one hundred cases. Indeed, so great was the press and crowd, we
were compelled to apply to the authorities for guards to preserve order and some sort of quietness. This, of course, was not the usual experience, for afterwards we managed to have a drink of tea and a bit of cracker first, and had the heavier meals prepared at a native restaurant and brought to us after treating the patients. The work in Amara we found in fair condition. Our colporteur, Merad, and family, were doing what they could for the cause. Many came to the shop, and were fond of conversing upon the relative merits of Mohammedanism and Christianity.

Our experience there was not all sober, but an incident or two of an amusing sort may help to enliven a dull report. Before leaving Busrah I had had the good fortune to have my permit for carrying drugs made out in a way which read—"Three boxes of drugs for which we have received the customs, therefore allow them to pass at Amara and into the county of Baghdad." On reaching Amara the boxes were sent to the customs, we expecting, of course, their immediate release. Yet what was my amusement when they insisted on their being opened in order to see if there was not some different kinds of medicine not permitted in the pass. After satisfying the curiosity of the officials the drugs were taken to the hotel and made ready for work.

While in Amara I had the pleasure of friendly calls from the chief of police, generals of the army, captains, and various others. For many of them it became my duty and pleasure to prescribe. The chief of police was, in some ways, most friendly. One evening the conversation turned into the question of travel and my visiting Constantinople. To satisfy his curiosity I showed him my diploma from Stamboul, whereupon the chief demanded my passport, and wrote some mystic Turkish words thereon and returned it. I did not at the time understand the performance, but now am certain he simply vouched for my character, for those mystic words passed me in all places of my further journey.

After spending seven days at Amara, and having the Turkish word for "crowd" and the word for "a guard" thoroughly impressed upon my memory, we again boarded a steamer for Koot, in the county of Baghdad, in order to take a boat for our next place, Hai.

We reached Hai on Saturday, about noon. I would not treat on Sunday. The Moslems asked "why," and were told it was the "Christians' Holy Day"—a new fact, seemingly, to them not only, but to those at Amara also.
At this place, Hai, I was watched quite closely until noon Sunday, and could not understand why until I learned that they thought I was an English spy, but upon seeing the mystic words on the passport everything was placed at my disposal. Was invited to drink coffee with the mayor, comptroller, chief of police, and stationed soldiers, besides several others. Monday I managed to treat, I think, about ninety patients. We left Hai that evening for Shattre, leaving many friends and, I hope, a good impression. We reached Shattre, our next stopping place, two days later, after various experiences on the way. We were in this place only a few hours and saw only eight or ten patients, and left in the evening for Nasariyeh, which place we reached Thursday morning 10 A.M. At Nasariyeh we met a Christian, who kindly invited us to his house for a meal until we could find a room or house.

We were fortunate in securing a house on the river Euphrates, and here we spent fifteen very pleasant days. We here met the prominent men of the place, and gave treatment to many who came. We would frequently have over fifty patients at the door asking treatment. Toward the last of our stay our supply of drugs of certain descriptions gave out and we were obliged to cease treatments. The eye of the infant daughter of the major-general in charge of the place became inflamed, and I was called in to prescribe. A little boric acid relieved the eye and caused the commander to be our friend. We were invited to take dinner with him Turkish fashion. In making a parting call he ordered us to notify the chief of the telegraph when I was expecting to visit Nasariyeh again. He then and there ordered this man to prepare us a house or place of entertainment. He also advised me to wait four days, when he would send down some twenty soldiers and thus make the voyage down the Euphrates safe.

We waited, and started at daybreak Tuesday, May 24. After a few hours sailing we reached a place, Sook-a-shook, where a ramble through the market caused the rest of the day to be very intolerable, because of the requests of the sick and indisposed who wanted me to “just examine, I don’t want medicine.” On our further journey down we stopped over night at a place called Harma, also Benisett, and Medena, at all of which places I had the pleasure of relieving sick and wounded. At the latter place, especially, did I have a most excellent time. Our arrival there was during the prevalence of a south wind and we wanted the
north. We decided to stay twenty-four hours or less, hoping for a change of wind. As soon as it was noised abroad that I was an English doctor, and that I had treated the daughter of the major-general of Nasariyeh, and that the latter had given strict charge concerning my safety to Busrah, the captain of the soldiers of Medena presented himself and made everything pleasant. I was requested to see a patient on board a Turkish man-of-war, in which I acquiesced. I partook of the evening meal with the captain and three lieutenants. Had a bed with a mosquito-netting placed at my disposal under cover, when otherwise I should have been compelled to sleep with heaven's canopy over my head. Here, also, our colporteur Esa was enabled to sell one or two books.

Starting from Medena, Friday, A. M., we soon reached Kornah, and leaving the latter place about 12 M., we reached Busrah without further incident at 8 P. M. after a most pleasant and enjoyable trip. Contrary to general impressions, everywhere I went, with possibly two exceptions, I was treated with the utmost cordiality by the Turkish officials and soldiery.

Taking a general view of my trip, I was not very much impressed with the opportunities for work at Amara, where is our shop, that is, from a medical point of view.

But at Nasariyeh I was very much so—almost astonished at what to me seemed the greatest opening for work in the medical line—on the river Euphrates, only a few miles from a place of pilgrimage, Hilla—a day's journey to a prominent city of the Nejd, country of Arabia. The people of Nejd come in caravans to trade at this place.

They are not under the rule of the Turks, are intellectual, and a majority of the inhabitants can read and write, or so report says. Arabia being the field of the mission, I earnestly believe a residence in this out of the way place for a year or two would familiarize the minds of the people to the idea of the Good Book, and if a physician resided there he would have many requests to go into the Nejd country to treat, and thus open the way for the Word of Life and colporteurs. Even as it was, I went over one afternoon to the Nejd land and saw a poor crippled patient. As I could not treat him satisfactorily in the short time I was there, I asked and expect him to visit me shortly, when, I trust, a slight amputation, followed by care, will save the remainder of a gangrenous foot.
Besides this apparent open door to the Nejd, it would also open up the river country of the Euphrates, Sook-a-shook, where malarial fever abounds; Medena, a soldiers' headquarters; Beni-sett, a city in a swamp, where the water drank looks very much as the pools in a barnyard after a storm. Thus you see the great call for physicians and money to occupy these places where the poor in great numbers demand our attention and care, and who would listen, even though out of politeness, to the message, which to hear and ponder is at last to believe and take Him as their pattern and guide.

A house on the river at Nasariyeh was offered to us while there at the small sum of $200, and with $250 additional could be put in good order for both medical and residential work. In fact it would, in one particular, be more convenient than our house here in Busrah, as the patients could be treated in an outbuilding, detached some distance from the main residential part. In passing, would note that the three Sabbaths we were in Nasariyeh we had prayer with gathered friends, some twelve or fourteen in number, thus forming a nucleus for future work.*

The health of the Mission is perhaps as good as could be expected for the summer months, with temperature ranging up to 111° in day, and 85° to 90° during night. Our friend at Muscat, Rev. P. J. Zwemer, has had the usual and expected attack of fever, but is now, according to his last letter, minus that "slight unpleasantness." He hopes, when the necessary repairs upon the house are completed, giving him two or more rooms, as well as a roof on which to sleep, that he will be able to escape with fewer attacks of fever. For his sake, as well as for any missionary who may be compelled to reside there, for a longer or shorter time, we hope that these repairs may be made.

We are thankful to say that here in Busrah, with the exception of about four or five days, when Rev. J. Cantine was prostrated with a slight fever, we have been and are in good health and spirits. Of course the colporteurs have all had their slight attacks of fever, but that is looked upon as part of the life of Busrah.

Our work this quarter compares favorably with last, in respect to kind and number treated. It will be noticed that our work "for

* The Mission very earnestly desire to occupy this place, Nasariyeh, but it cannot be done unless some friend or friends, will provide the means by special gift.

Cor. Sec
Mohammedans” has again been kept in view. Still the Gospel messages were given as a general thing each dispensary morning. This morning our lesson was from Matthew xv: 10–20.

The following is summary of work for quarter:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Moslem 1,253</th>
<th>Men 672</th>
<th>Christian 135</th>
<th>Women 494</th>
<th>Eye 495</th>
<th>Jew 45</th>
<th>Boys 205</th>
<th>Surg. 212</th>
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<td>Med. 790</td>
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H. R. Lankford Worrall, M.D

*MUSCAT.*

Although for ten days the mercury has never been lower than 104°, even at midnight, yet at the end of the quarter we cast our log and are able to report progress.

At the beginning of the quarter we were encouraged by frequent visits of Arabs from the interior of Oman, whose friendship we had gained on our previous tour. They often brought presents of fruit, etc., and in turn were entertained at my house, especially with a tune on the organ or a chorus song by the slave boys—both, of course, a novelty to them, the latter an object lesson as well. And none of them left my house without additional copies and portions of Scripture for distribution.

Thus the Word is having its free course in Oman, and let us pray it may also be glorified in the conversion of Moslems to their Lord and Saviour.

Compelled by the need of a change I made a trip to Busrah in May, returning with the same steamer to Bahrein. In Busrah, although in quarantine, there was no difficulty in communicating with Mr. Cantine, and making our plans for the summer months.

On account of the death of available native assistants we thought it better to close the Bible shop at Bahrein for the summer months after my visit. I spent a fortnight at Bahrein, where, during the month of June, on account of a northern trade wind, it is comparatively cool. Our rented house there is well situated, and a well known place to a large number of Arabs from neighboring Darein and Kateef, as well as from Hassa. Many called to see me, and showed an interest in us and our work.
Reaching Muscat June 18th, I was in time to carry out the instruction of the Board to purchase our present rented property, and as I write I feel a pleasant satisfaction in knowing that I live in Mission property. The house is well situated, and with a few repairs will become a suitable Mission House and School for Freed Slaves.

Such is, in brief, the record of the quarter. There have been many discouragements; Jusef, our colporteur, has been ill for over two months, reducing the sale of Scriptures to a minimum. The teacher of the freed slave boys also succumbed to the heat, and was, for a time, unable to do his work. But looking backward we are encouraged to note what the Lord has done for Muscat during these four years.

Oman accessible, wherever we have been able to go. At its capital a Mission House, owned by the Board, as a working centre. Hundreds of Scriptures sold where they had never seen a Gospel. A freed slave school as a daily rebuke to Muscat’s lingering shame, and a printing press, in embryo state, to be sure, but which will soon blossom into usefulness.

The report for Bible sales is as follows:

<table>
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<th></th>
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<th>Scriptures</th>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>Educational</th>
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<td>43</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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P. J. Zwemer,