THE

ARABIAN MISSION.

FIELD REPORT.

NUMBER EIGHT, OCT. 1 to DEC. 31, 1893.
THE ARABIAN MISSION.

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OCTOBER—DECEMBER, 1893.

REPORT FROM BUSRAH STATION.

After a two-weeks' stop in Bahrein I reached Busrah about the middle of October, having been away about three months, half of which was spent in a vacation trip to India. I found my associate, P. J. Zwemer, occupying our new mission house, which has been taken for five years from August 1st, 1893. We spent a couple of weeks together and then, a favorable opportunity offering, Mr. Zwemer left for Muscat. We have long recognized the importance of this place in any scheme for evangelizing the Eastern coast of Arabia. Its stable Government, English influence and trade, indicate its advantages as a base of operation for the Province of Oman. Mr. Zwemer's report for the past two months will show whether our hopes have been realized.

In the latter part of November Dr. and Mrs. Sutton, missionaries of the C. M. S. at Bagdad, spent a few days with us. Our opportunities for seeing fellow-workers from other societies are very limited, but when found are always enjoyed and prove a source of strength and encouragement.

Not long ago a letter was received from the U. S. Minister at Constantinople, asking for information in regard to complaints made against us by the Ottoman Government at Stamboul. As there had been no friction here at Busrah for a long time, we were at a loss to explain this complaint, except as a plan to embarrass a new minister by reviving the troubles of last year. A full statement of our work and plans was sent, to which no reply has yet been received.

Our staff of native assistants and colporteurs has been enlarged and changed since last quarter. Hakim Safir, an Indian convert from Islam, is now in charge of the Bible-shop, some temporary work has been done for us at Mohommerah, and Daoood and Rajouki have been more or less on the road. Tours have been taken down the Shatt el Arab and up both the Tigris and Euphrates. In some cases the sales were excellent, in others the obstacles put in the way by Turkish officials have caused much delay and trouble. At Nasarieh on the Euphrates half of their books were taken away through some technicality, and it was only after appealing to the English Consul at Busrah that part of them were returned.
From Jacoob Johann, the Moslem convert, who was exiled over a year ago, we hear—both from himself and from the colporteurs of the B. & F. Bible Society. From all reports he is living an open and consistent Christian life which has already borne fruit in the town where God's providence has placed him. In his last letter he wrote that he had grounds for believing that he would be released before long. Located either at Muscat or Bahrein he and his wife would be a great help to our work and would also be free from the petty annoyances of the Turkish Government. We hope and pray that he soon will be enabled to join us.

There are two places midway between this and Bagdad, the one on the Tigris, the other on the Euphrates, and both of them large towns at which a good colporteur could profitably spend some time, opening a shop for book sales and preparing the way for other and more permanent occupancy. Whether or no we will be enabled to take advantage of these opportunities will depend in large measure upon our support from home.

As one entering a darkened room finds the objects about him growing more and more distinct, so we, new comers into this land of darkness, are recognizing more and more clearly the great needs for Gospel work on all sides of us. God grant that we may be strong and of a good courage, so that we may go up and possess this land.

BUSRAH, January 1, 1894.

BAHREIN ISLANDS.

The work at Bahrein during the past three months has been carried on in the lines pursued hitherto, but because of our continued stay on the islands it has been uninterrupted, and therefore book sales and medical work show larger statistics. When we first came to the islands it was with the purpose of making them a sort of out-station to be in charge of a responsible native worker, with a missionary visiting and supervising the work from time to time. But the past year has proved that here as well as at Busrah there is a great and open door, and that the work will require the continued presence of at least one missionary throughout the entire year, if possible. A single man, who is a qualified medical practitioner and at the same time at heart a missionary, would be the ideal worker for the islands. Much as my small acquaintance with drugs has been of help in disarming prejudice and making friends, I daily find how little I do.
know and how much I ought to know of medicine. The most interesting cases I must turn away because I am not a surgeon, and because the responsibility and anxiety of treating those who are dangerously ill is too great for a non-professional.

The need of a medical missionary here is second only to the claim of Busrah. In the whole island, with some 50,000 people, there is no doctor, and native quackery is cruel in the extreme. In a place where dentistry is practiced by the use of wedges, hammers and tongs, and where they fill a hollow tooth with melted lead to ease pain, I have won a score of friends by less painful methods.

The accompanying statement shows how we have done the best we could. I have only counted “new cases” in the summary; the average number each day was about seven. They came not only from Khateef and from the many inland villages, but from Hassa and Katar as well. So far I have found it impossible to get patients to come at a fixed time so as to have a Scripture reading with them each morning. But I have often found opportunity for conversation with individuals or sold a patient a portion of Scripture.

**OUR BIBLE-SHOP.**

While on a tour to Hassa and Kateef Mr. Cantine had charge of the work, and on my return one of our colporteurs had come to my help. He suffered very much from fever, however, and coming from Persia found the climate trying, and in December had to leave for Busrah. Providentially I found a substitute in a Syrian Christian, Naif Kaimy, whom I met on a mail steamer, and he is now with me.

The Scripture sales for October were larger than for any previous month, and the total sales for the quarter would have been proportionate except that we were out of stock because of a delay in an order from Bagdad. The opposition to our being at Bahrein still centres about our Bible-shop, which is a sure indication that this part of our work should be pushed for all it is worth; and God’s Word is above price.

I have already written about a request made to us to take down a copy of the Lord’s Prayer in Arabic which hangs in our shop, because the children who passed by read the large print and were learning it. By cautious disobedience this objection has come to nought, and we have now added the Ten Commandments as a second lesson in large print for the children.
A more subtle movement was that of a Shiah Moslem from Shiraz, Persia, who is also a "doctor," and who tried to boycott us by offering a fabulous rent to the owner of the Bible-shop with the purpose of turning us out. The shop we occupied belonged originally to an Indian Moslem merchant, but when he died on last year's pilgrimage to Mecca the shop, according to Moslem law, became *Wakf*, i.e., religious property. The Kadhi, of whom I have written before, was the agent, therefore, with whom I had to deal in the matter of rent. This Kadhi's order, proclaimed in the bazaar last May (that no one was to rent the mission a shop or house except by his permission), being still in force, the attempt to evict us from his own shop was somewhat serious. After a great deal of talk and trouble we concluded it best to seek another location rather than pay fabulous rent. Through the assistance of the British Agent, a Shiah Moslem, we have now rented another shop for a year, at the cost of considerable ill feeling between the two sects of Islam on the island. The present location is not as good as the former, but I hope to change once more and permanently when the way opens.*

Bahrain, January 9, 1894.

S. M. ZWEMER.

BOOK SALES.

The languages in which the books are printed are chiefly Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Hebrew, Gujarati and English: 98 per cent. of the sales are to Muslims, and are of the Arabic language.

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<td>75</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>383</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscat..................</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>111</td>
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Five native helpers are now employed as colporteurs.

THE TOUR TO HASSA AND KATEEF.

In October, 1893, Rev. S. M. Zwemer made a twelve-days' tour in the province of Hassa, which lies to the west of Bahrain Islands. The tour was undertaken at considerable risk, and not until the way had been paved with months of prayer. Journey­ing 100 miles in a southeasterly direction, he visited El Hofhoof, the capital city of the province, and from thence proceeding north for 120 miles, he passed through several large towns until he came to El Kateef, a large city, but an uninviting one. The tour lay over long stretches of desert, interspersed with rich and productive lands. After passing through the desert for many hours the approach to Hofhoof called forth a vivid description of

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*The above * applies to the tour to Hassa and Kateef.
its scenic beauty: "On the second day at noon we sighted the palm forests that surround Hofhoof and give it, Palgrave says, 'the general aspect of a white and yellow onyx chased in an emerald rim.' At sunset we went on to Menazeleh, a distance of about three miles, through gardens and rushing streams of tepid water. The next morning early we again rode through gardens and date orchards half visible in the morning mist. At 7 o'clock the mosques and walls of Hofhoof appeared right before us, as the sun lifted the veil; it was a beautiful sight. During my short stay all the books and Scriptures I brought with me were sold, even my own Testament; a rebuke to lack of faith in not taking more."

The following quotations from Mr. Zwemer's letter, written in lead pencil at Hofhoof to the missionaries at Busrah, are like sparks from the anvil, showing the spirit of the missionaries in their work:

"Here I am at the gateway of Nejd. God has answered our prayers and brought me here all safe. I had no trouble after I got here. The road was long and I had some difficulty about food. Here is a Paradise. Palgrave's descriptions are not exaggerated at all. Rivers of water and dates and all kinds of fruit. Many people whom I know from Bahrein. Much kindness was shown me by the Pasha, and no objection so far to sale of books in a quiet way. God be praised! In fact, if I knew you had a good man at Bahrein I would not return. The Dowla has made me an offer as assistant doctor 'beladeeje.' I plan to leave, however, in a few days, but have already promised to come back with lots of medicine and books. We ought to get a shop here."

**THE OUTLOOK AT MUSCAT.**

In the early part of December Rev. P. J. Zwemer visited Muscat with a view to finding out the prospects for mission work there. The outlook is decidedly favorable. Being to some extent under British protection, it is possible here even to read the Scriptures in public—something not allowed in Turkish lands. The following letter from Mr. Zwemer shows the opportunity open to the Arabian Mission in this field:

"For some time Muscat offered opportunity for Bible and mission work, and it being unoccupied my coming here was with the purpose of seeing what method of work was possible at this place. Naoom, the colporteur, and for some time previous my Arabic teacher in Busrah, went with me. We arrived at Muscat on November 12, and after a 24-hours' quarantine at a small vil-
lage. Kantab, six miles south, were permitted to enter the place. An old house where we lodged the first night proved a suitable dwelling, and I rented the same for ten rupees a month. Both at Busrah and Bahrein the existence of a Bible-shop having met with considerable and continued opposition, I was rather wary at first, especially since only a few months ago a colporteur of the B. & F. B. S., on a tour here, was driven out of the bazaar by a mob.

"After a few days, however, I succeeded in finding and renting a shop, and from that time until now our colporteur, Naoom, has been in charge and there has been no disturbance. This fact is due, I think, to strong English political influence with H. H. the Sultan.

"Muscat for some time has been considered a Bible distributing station of the B. & F. B. S., being occasionally visited by colporteurs from Bushire. A number of Bibles and portions belonging to the B. & F. B. S. were still at the British Consulate. With consent of the Superintendent of the B. & F. B. S., Rev. T. R. Hodgson, at Bushire, the larger part of these were taken to the shop and are now exposed for sale. The number of sales for November 15—December 31, 1893, as appears from the enclosed report, was 111 books.

"On invitation the Arabs are very willing to come to my house 'to talk religion.' By making this a regular custom on Sunday mornings I hope this will develop into a Sunday service. The colporteur, Naoom, proves a very satisfactory Bible reader.

"A few requests have come to me for instruction in English. Although nothing has as yet been done in the way of systematic teaching, a mission school would not be impossible at Muscat.

"Most of the villages along the mountain passes have been visited, Bibles sold and, in most places, publicly read in bazaar or coffee shop. The villages of Kantab, Bustaan, Sedab, Ry'am and Kolaboo, as well as the larger Matrah, which is the terminus of the inland route, have been thus supplied with the Word. An extensive tour from Matrah to the larger inland cities seems possible and ought to be made during this cool season.

"A severe attack of the epidemic 'dingo' fever, which I could not shake off, made a ten-days' vacation in Bombay necessary as well as beneficial. I returned on January 6, and found the Bible-shop in order as I had left it and the increasing sales encouraging. Yours, for Arabia,

"Muscat, January 16, 1894.

P. J. ZWEMER.